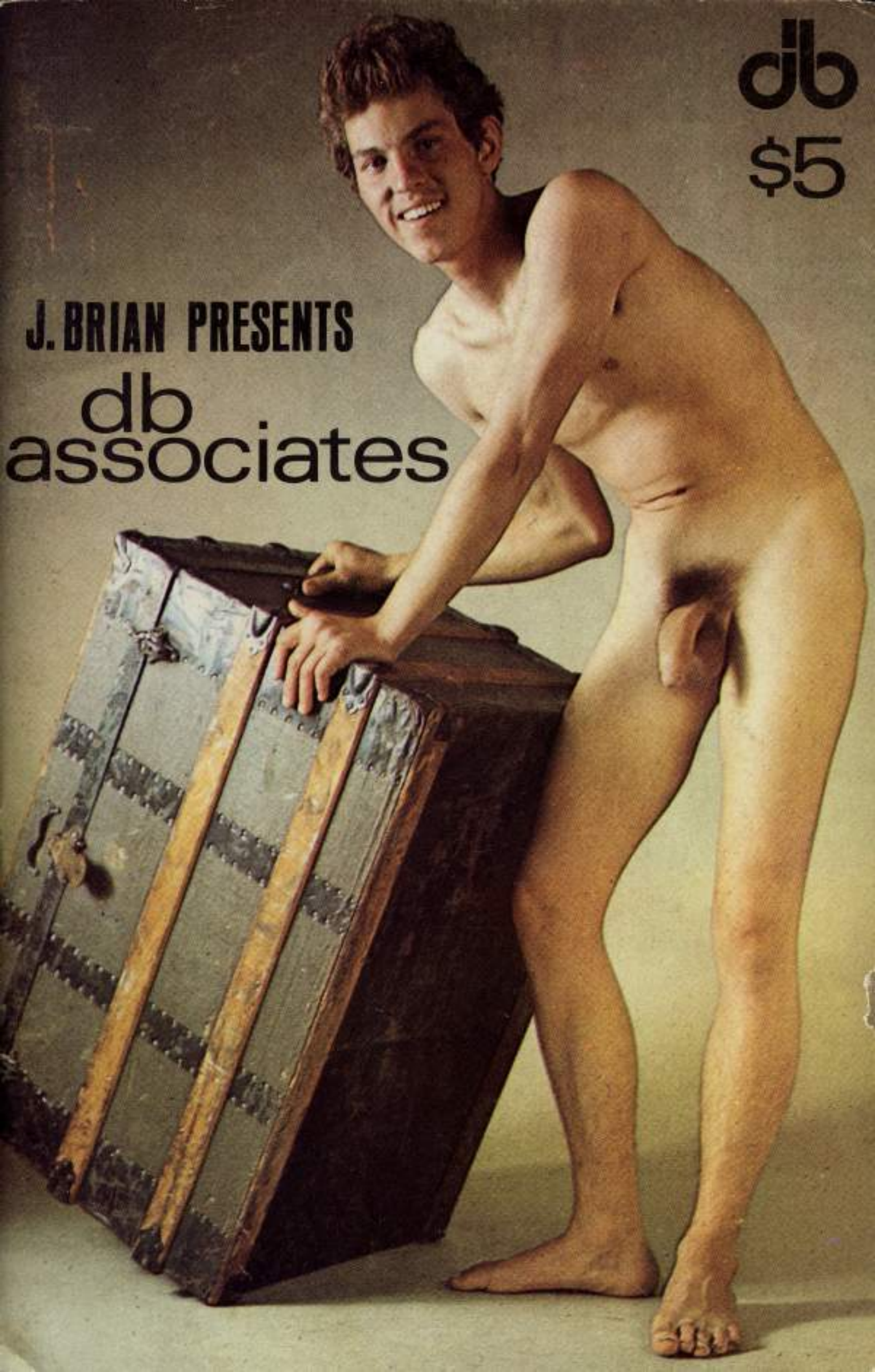
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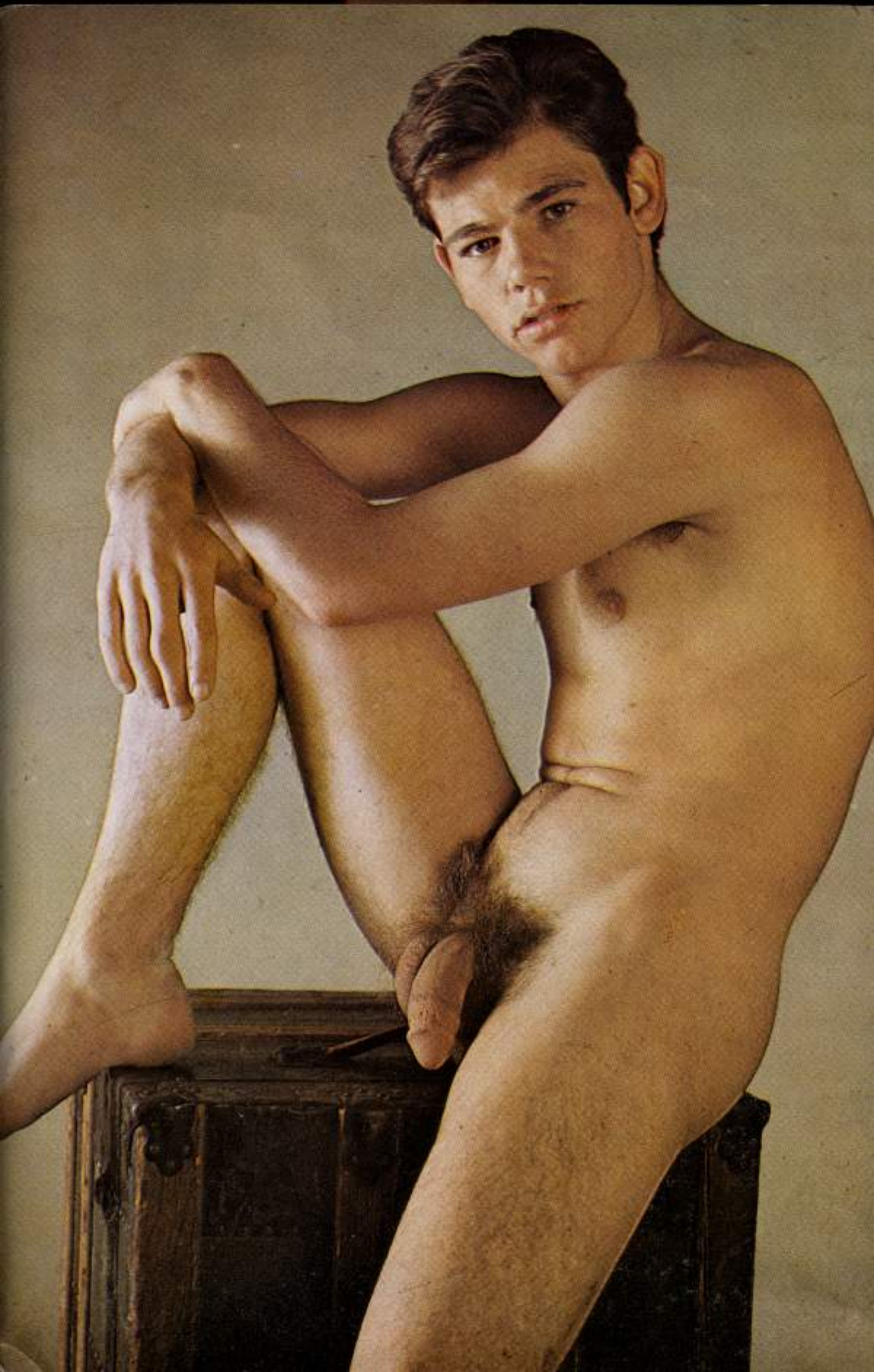

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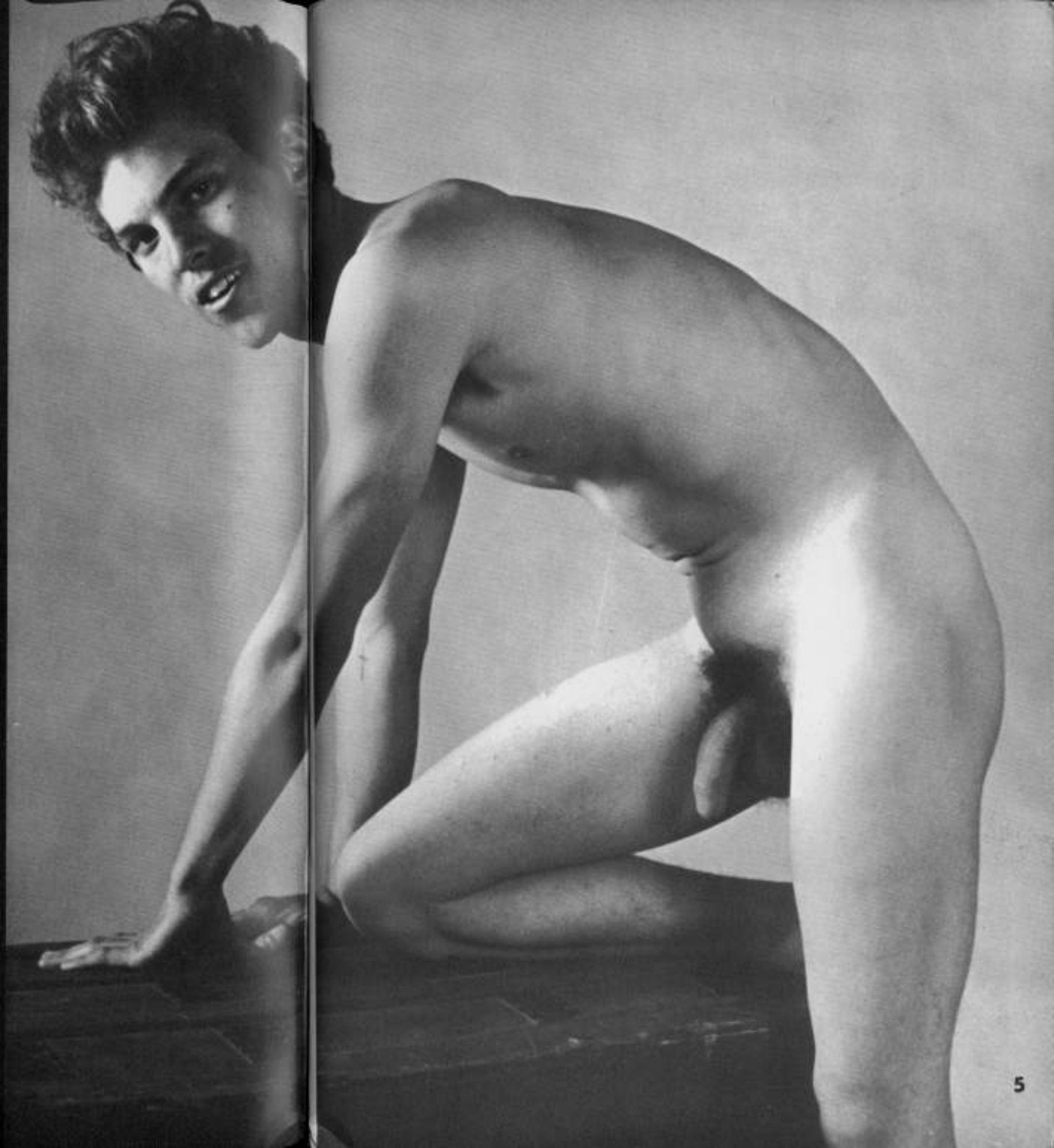

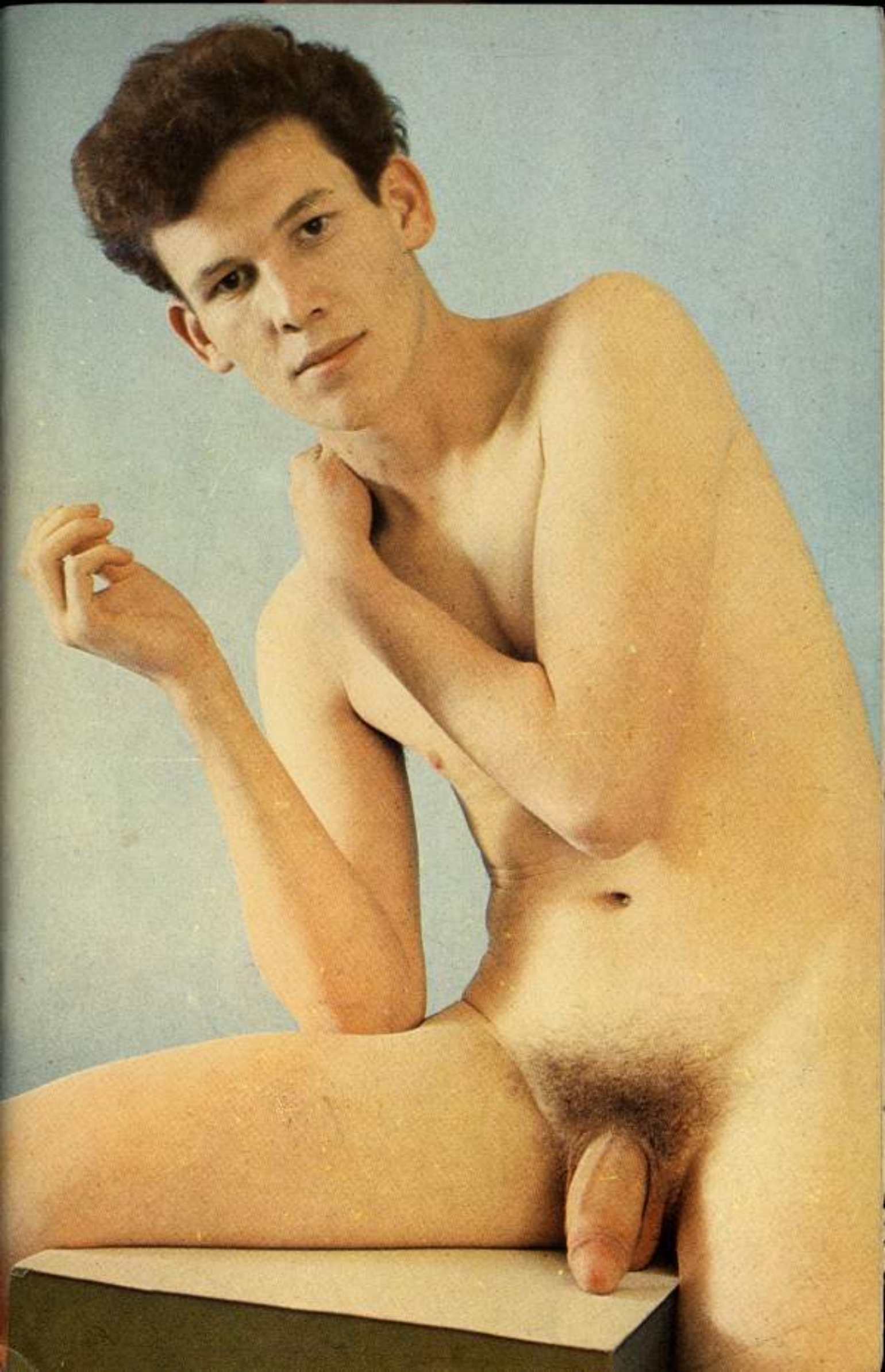

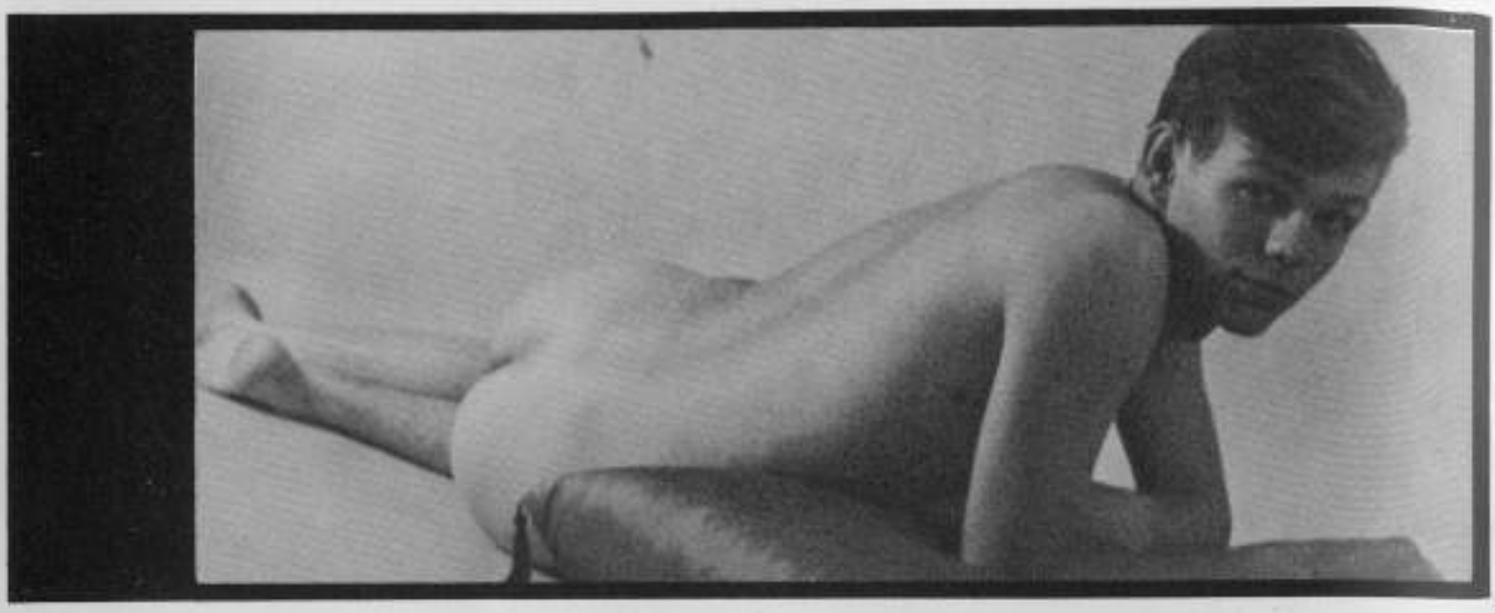

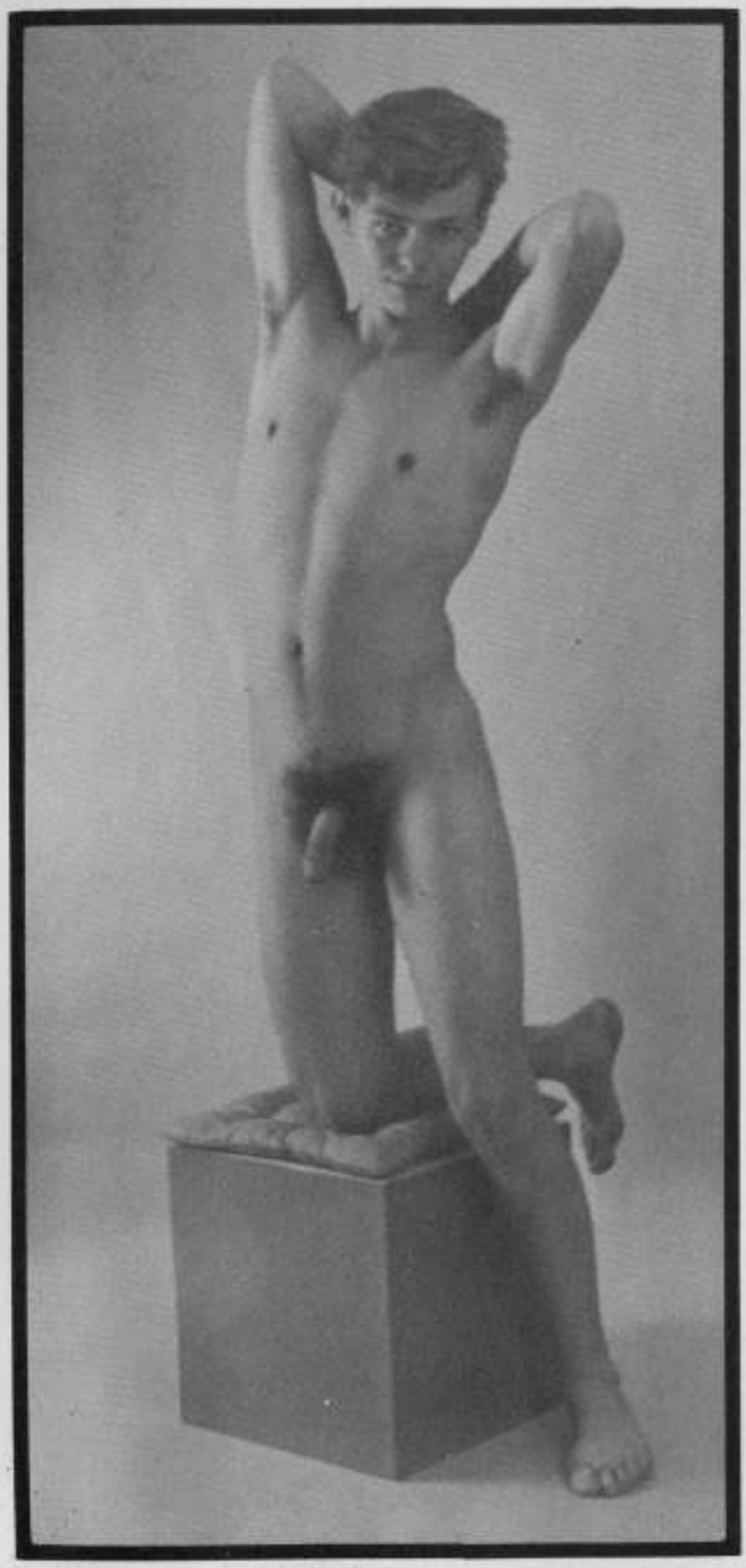

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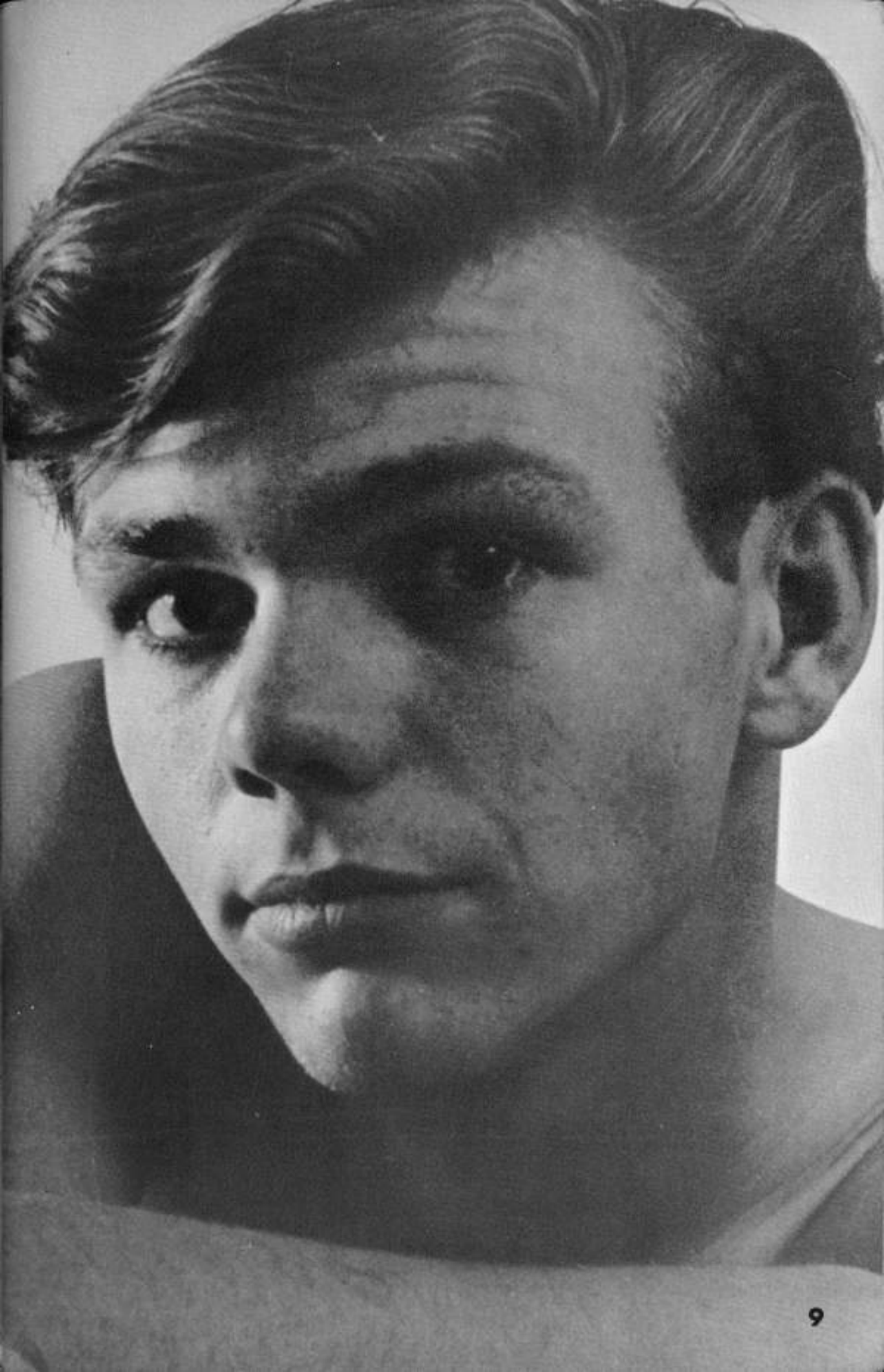


Sherbert in Damascus

By David Snow

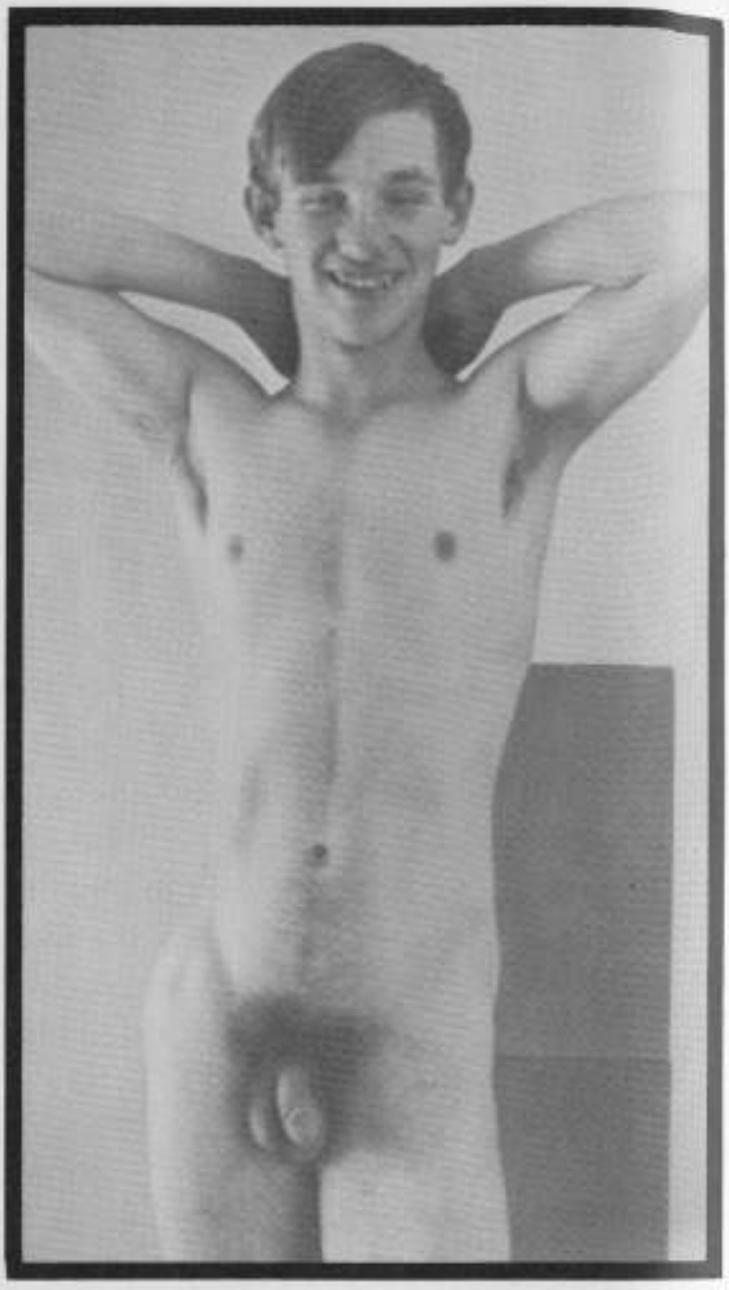
I shall never forget that afternoon in Damascus. I had arrived in the city that morning for a job interview. Since I had a few hours to kill before the interview I decided to explore the city. The curious winding streets of Damascus were particularly inviting on that hot summer day—with the clear blue sky overhead, pale rimmed at the horizon like a melon rind; for upon entering these straw roofed streets speckled shadows projected a sense of welcome relief and contrast from the glar of the hot summer sun. As I walked I could feel the pleasant sensation of my Levi's rubbing against my skin. It was then that I noticed him. He was imperially slim, and seemed to glide along the street. Clad only in a pair of loose fitting Turkish pants hanging low around his waist, he had neither shirt nor shoes. The pant legs rested on his large smooth calfs. He was so beautiful that I decided to follow him, just so that I could feast my eyes a little longer on his graceful body. I had to quicken my pace to keep up with him. The crowded streets became narrower as we went further into the old section of the city. Mysterious vield women in black robes darted into deeply shadowed doorways. Handsome, dusty camel drivers dressed in long flowing robes just off a desert caravan flashed smiles as they brushed against me. Suddenly he took a turn

down a dark narrow alley. It was only wide enough for one person to pass. The buildings overhung on each side of the street so that almost no light filtered down from above. The shadows were dark and cool. The hub-bub of the crowd faded into the distance. All was quiet and still. He stopped. I stopped. In the soft smokey light his body glistened with persperation. He funbled with his pants and I could hear the trickle of water against the wall drain down into the gutter as he relieved himself. I did the same. He turned and smiled at me, His dark brown eyes were friendly. He spoke softly. I smiled in aquiescence. Our hands exchanged places–just then someone entered at the far end of the street. We walked on. I told him that I did not have much time. (My interview was at three; I glanced at my watch–it was just after one, and I still had to get back to my hotel and change.)

We decided to go to a cafe. He took me to the center of the great bazaar, where, he said, was the best place to get sherbert. It was an out-door street cafe with small round tables and not quite level sitting chairs set all higgledy-piggledy at the edge of the street. To one side, set up on a platform, was a row of large vates. Behind each was a muscular young man with turban, naked to the waist. These were the sherbert makers. Each held a wooden pole to pound the ice and flavors together. Sherbert in Damascus, unlike American sherbert, is made of crushed ice and then subtly flavored with essences of raisins, rare nuts, or delicately perfumed flowers.

We sat down and ordered. The table was small and my leg was thrust against his. I could see now that his pants were rather flimsy and in need of repair. He gently rubbed his leg against mine. I noticed an attractive bulge in his pants. He saw that I was looking and grinned. Sweat trickeled down his hard belly. I could see thick soft curly hair below his navel. Finally, our grinning waiter served the sherberts in cold silver dishes. The flavors of jasmine, pistachio and rose were so delicate it seemed as if I were inhaling the essence of a perfume rather than eating something. The colors were equally as subtle, being of pale whites, watery greens, pinks and yellows; lending themselves to the overall feeling of coolness and refreshment. I slowly spooned the white creamy mixture into my warm, wet mouth. All the while our eyes were locked together. As I watched my new friend tongue a spoonful of the watery misture with a not quite open mouth, a little dripped onto his breast, ran down to his navel, stopped, then down into that luscious soft black forest of curly hair revealed by his loose trousers. He took his finger and wiped the sweet sherbert off his belly. With this I felt a pleasant bulge in my pants. What was left of the white mixture had almost turned clear now. He noticed this as he licked his finger. It was hot and the sherbert melted quickly. I looked at my watch. It was after two. I had to go. My new friend quickly wrote down an address where he said I could meet him later that evening. I stuffed it into my pocket and dashed off to my hotel where I changed. At the hotel I discovered I had lost the address he had given me. I looked everywhere for that scrap of paper. It was no use. It was gone. I hurried off to my job interview.

(Continued on Page 18)



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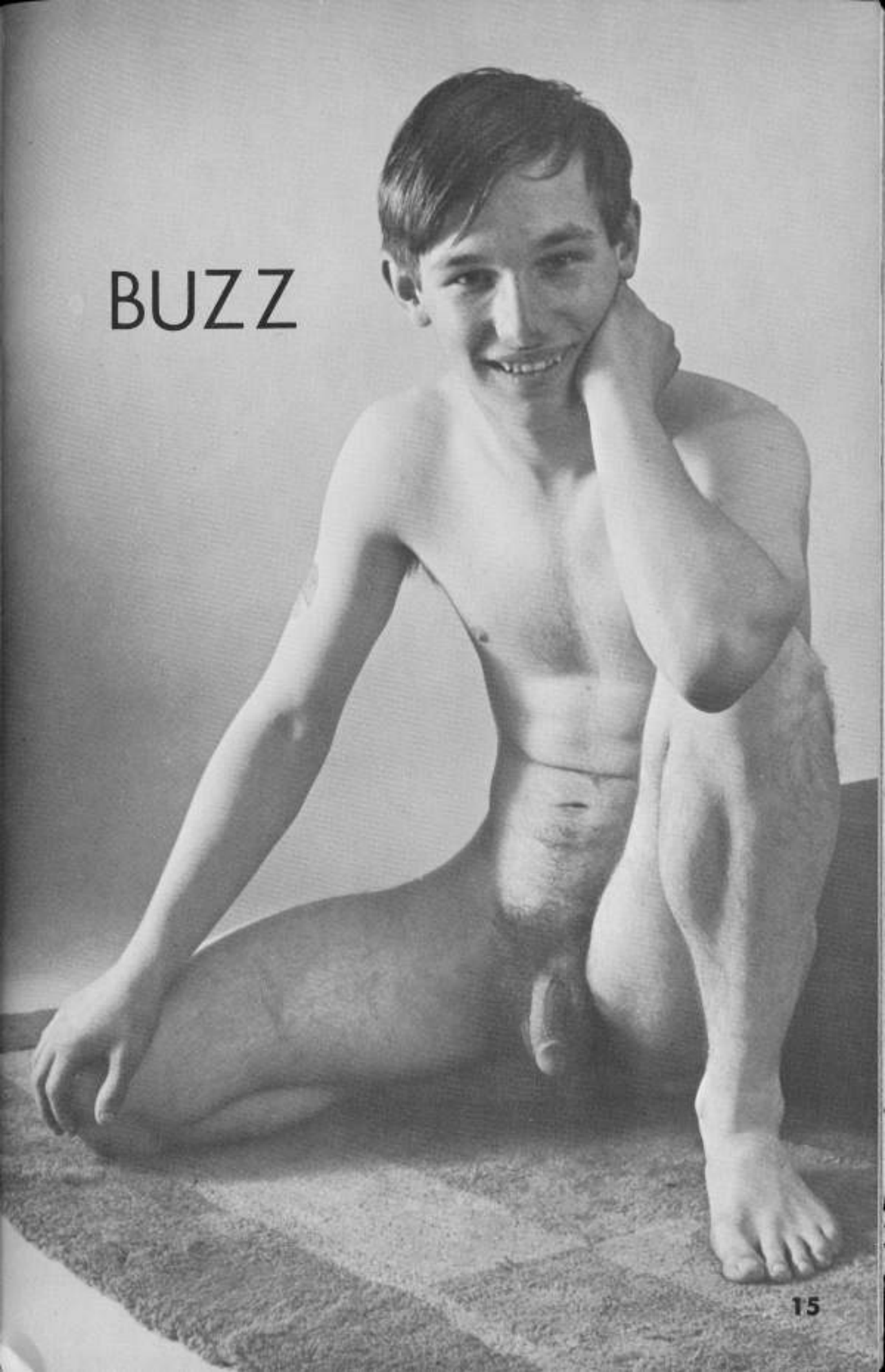
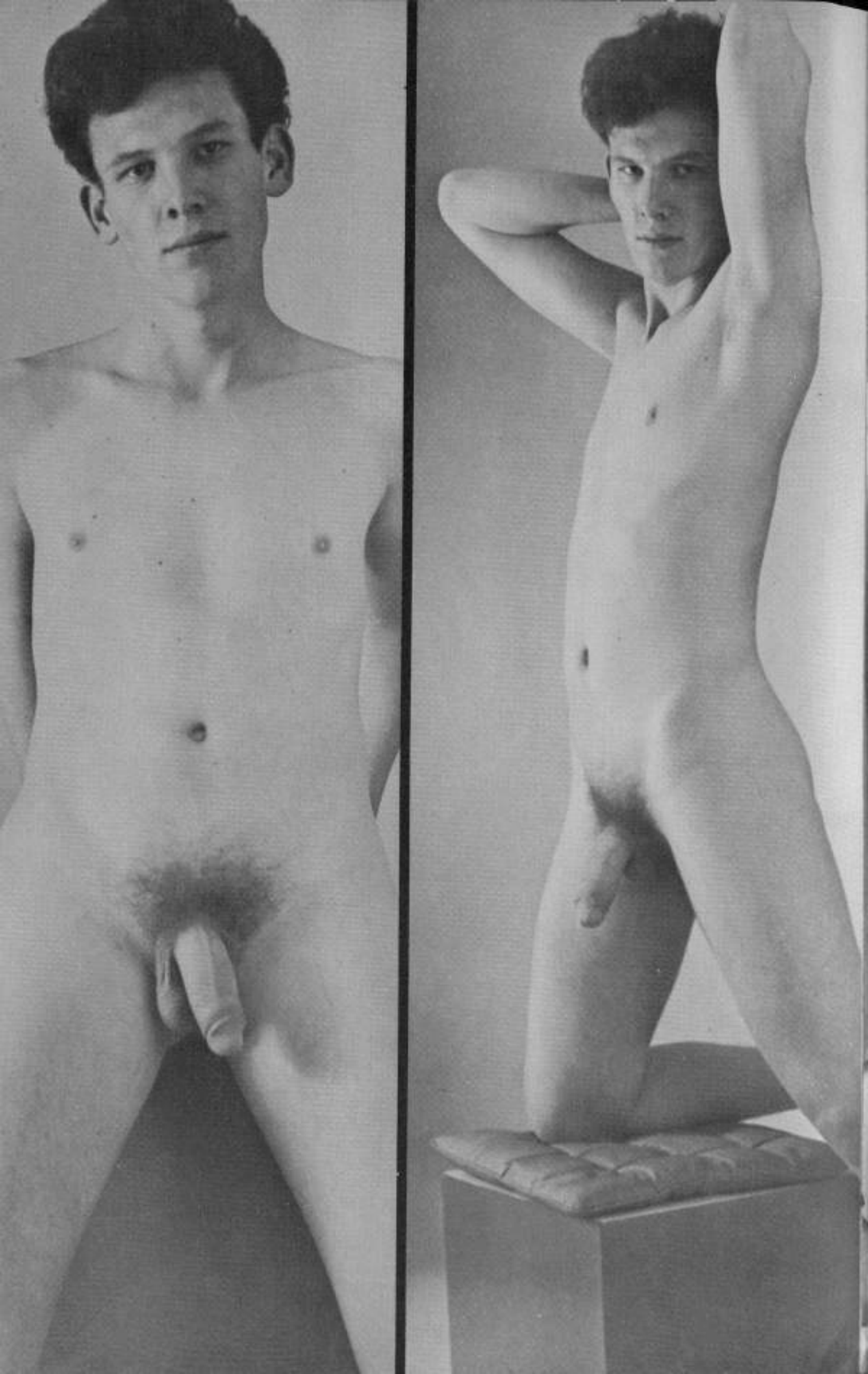
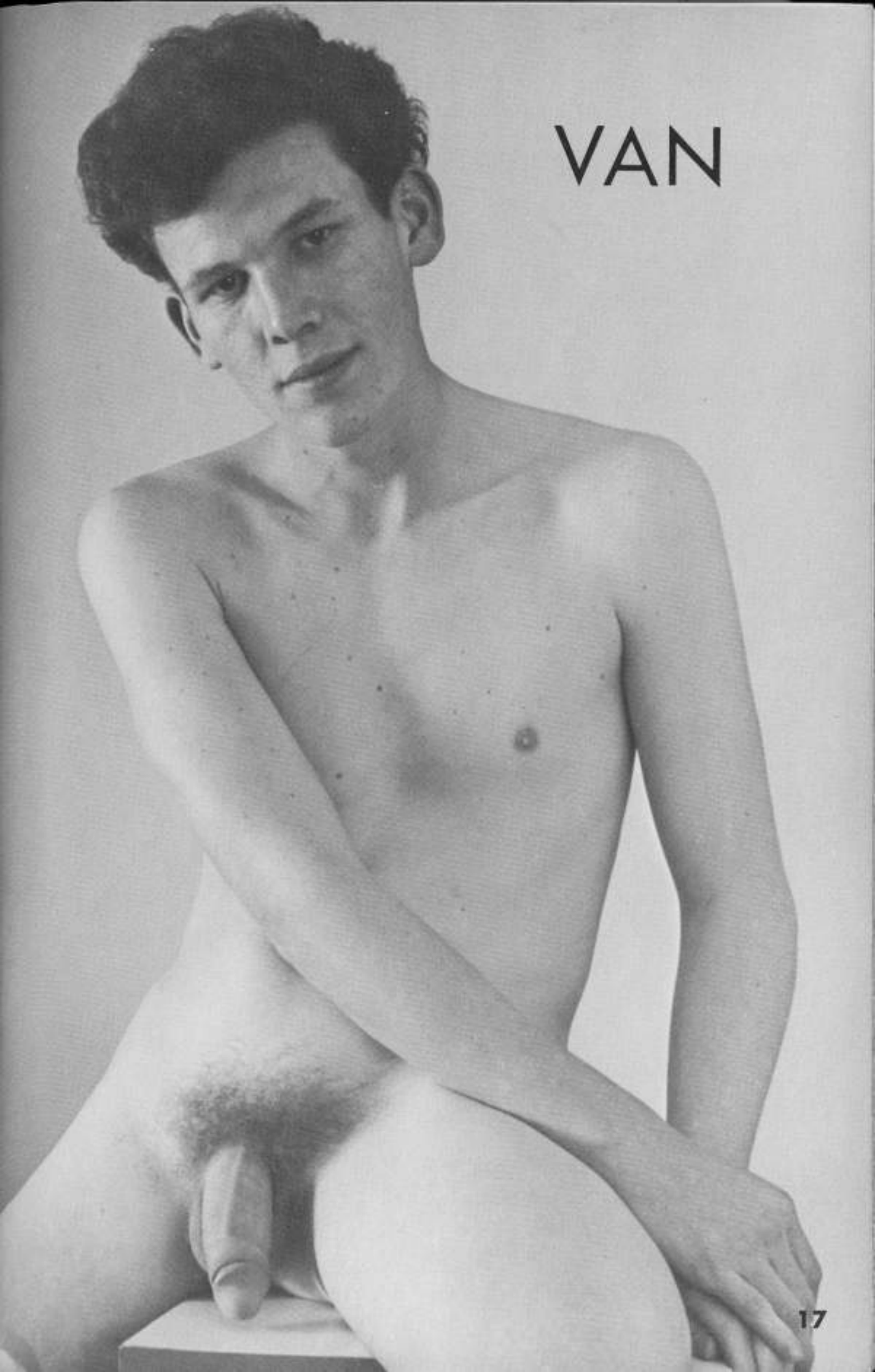




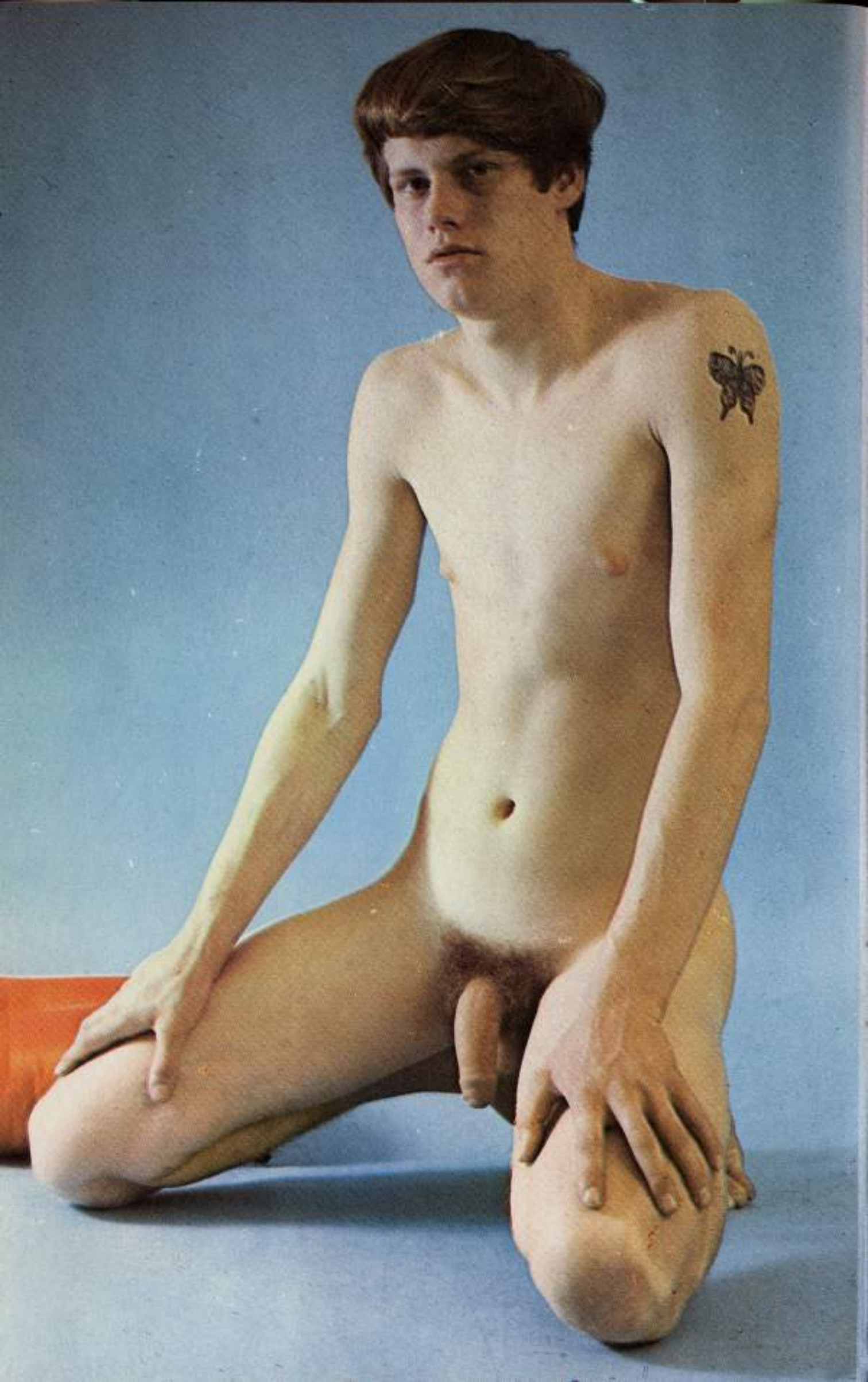

VAN

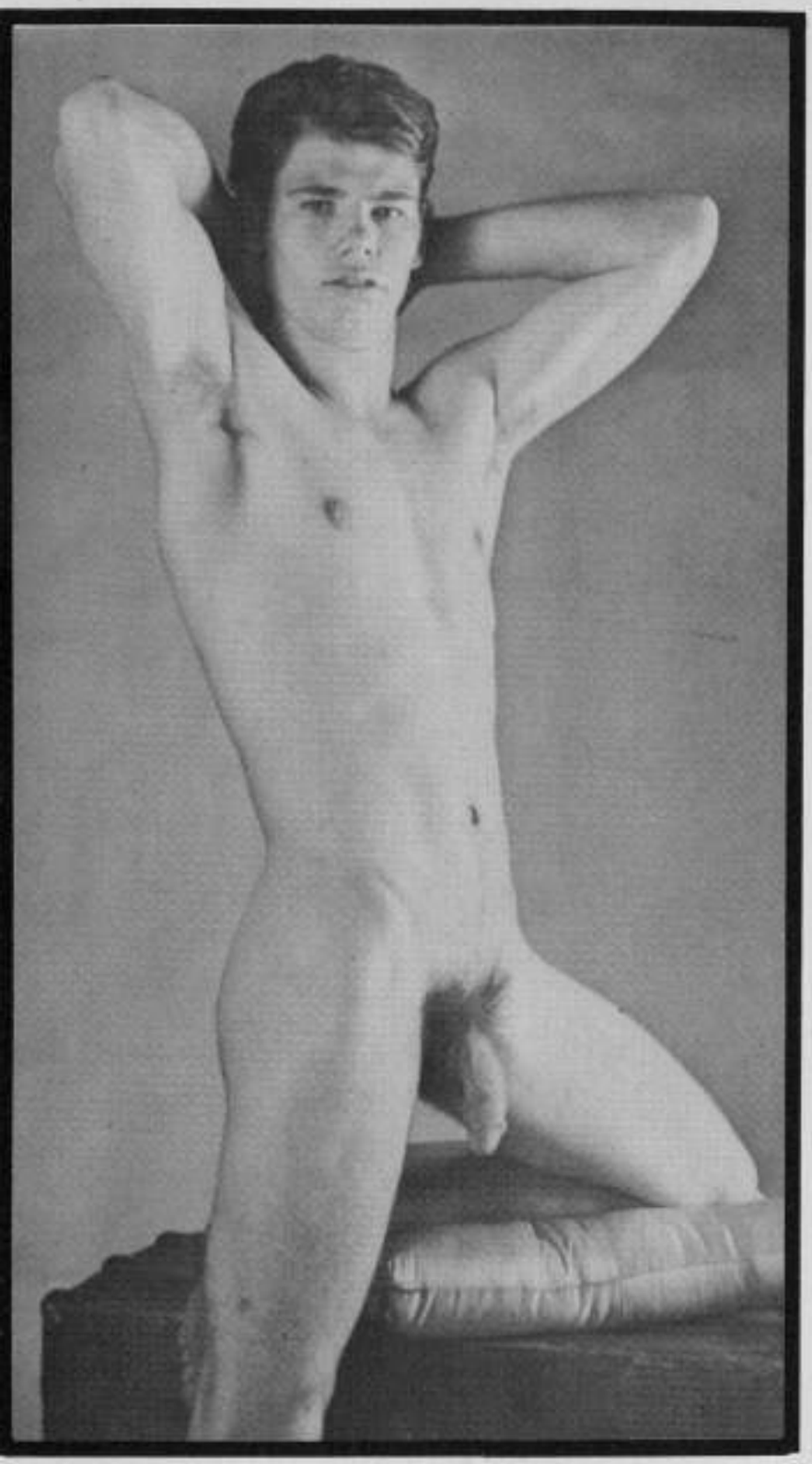
I arrived, almost late. The address was 37 Rue Bliss. Scarlet bougainvillea spilled over the high street wall. The gate was ajar. I stepped into a shimmering garden. Fountains splattered into pools. Ancient poplars cast long shadows across the path and drive. I walked up to the stone mansion. An elderly gentleman ushered me in. I was told to wait in a room opening on to the garden. The lost scrap of paper eclipsed all else from my mind. I sat there waiting. And I imagined he and I in this noiseless garden—the quivering leaves in the sun, sprawling summer, we together as in an aquarium of identical astral days, sunlight splashing down from the skies falling prostrate in huge calms, like some cadenza of eternal lingering. But he was gone.

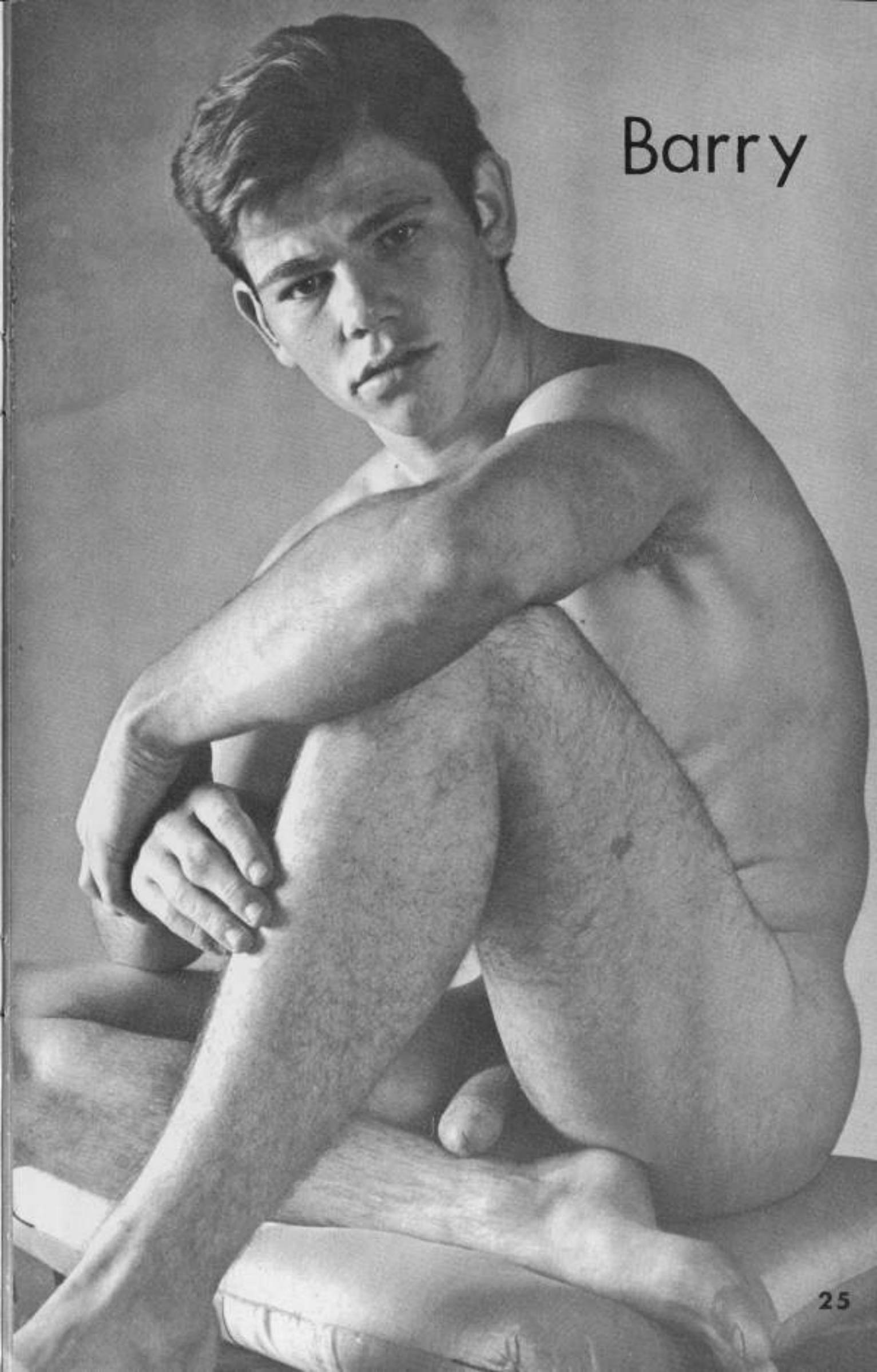
At this moment of reverie Mr. Kahlil came in. The interview was interminable. All I could think of was the boy and the sherbert. Mr. Kahlil had drinks brought in. The shadows in the garden were melting into darkness. Mr. Kahlil drew a drapery of gauze to keep the mosquitoes out. It bellowed in mounds with the evening breezes. He was going on and on: "...Mr. Snow you seem to be a good young man. I am an old man. With all my businesses I have no time. We have no schools here in Damascus. I need someone to teach and guide him. Someone like you..." A male figure appeared behind the gossamer curtain. He lifted his arms like wings, drew them apart, and entered the room. He glittered as he walked, and give hold to my vastest dreams like some cadenza. Mr. Kahlil said, "Mr. Snow, this is the boy."

It was he.

Roger



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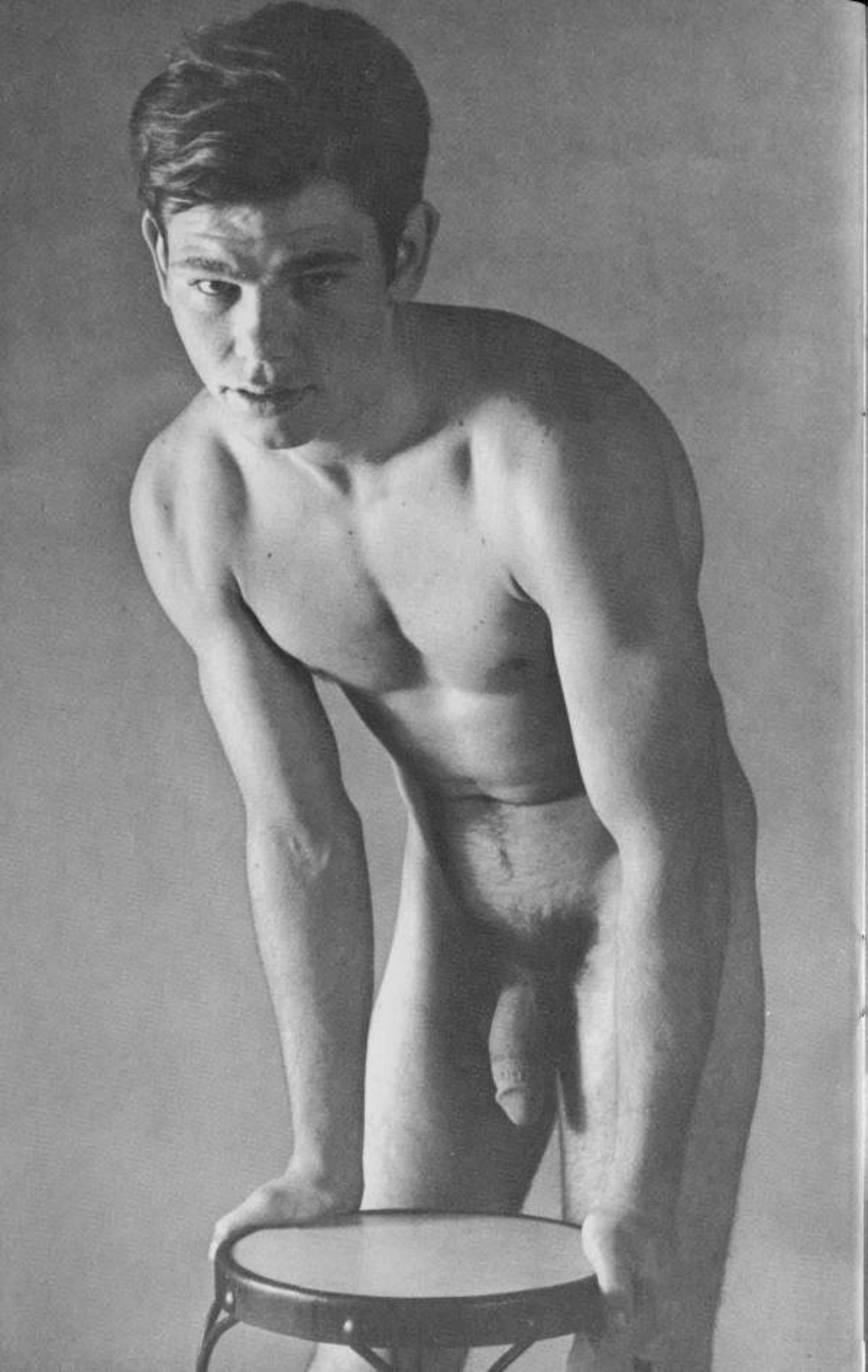

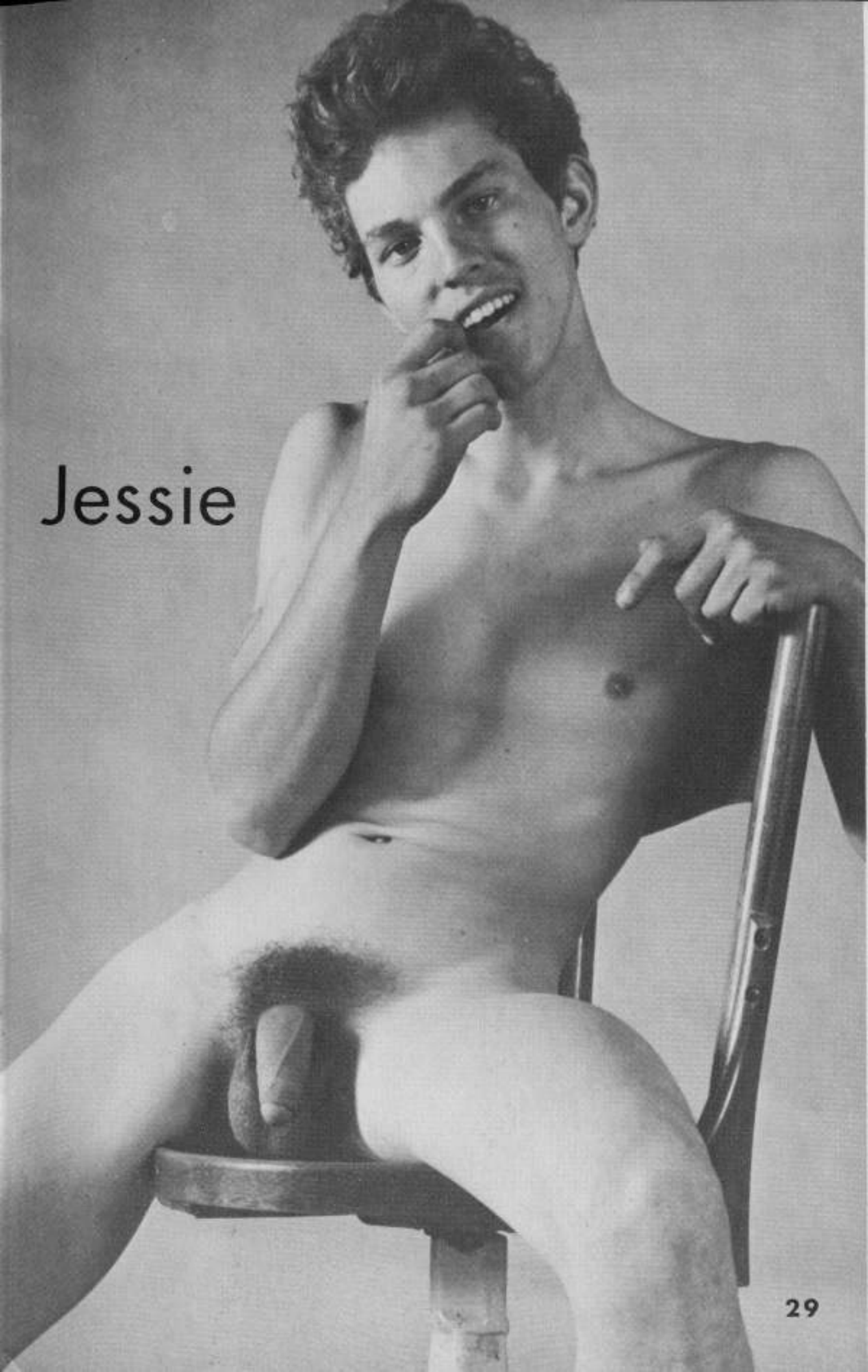
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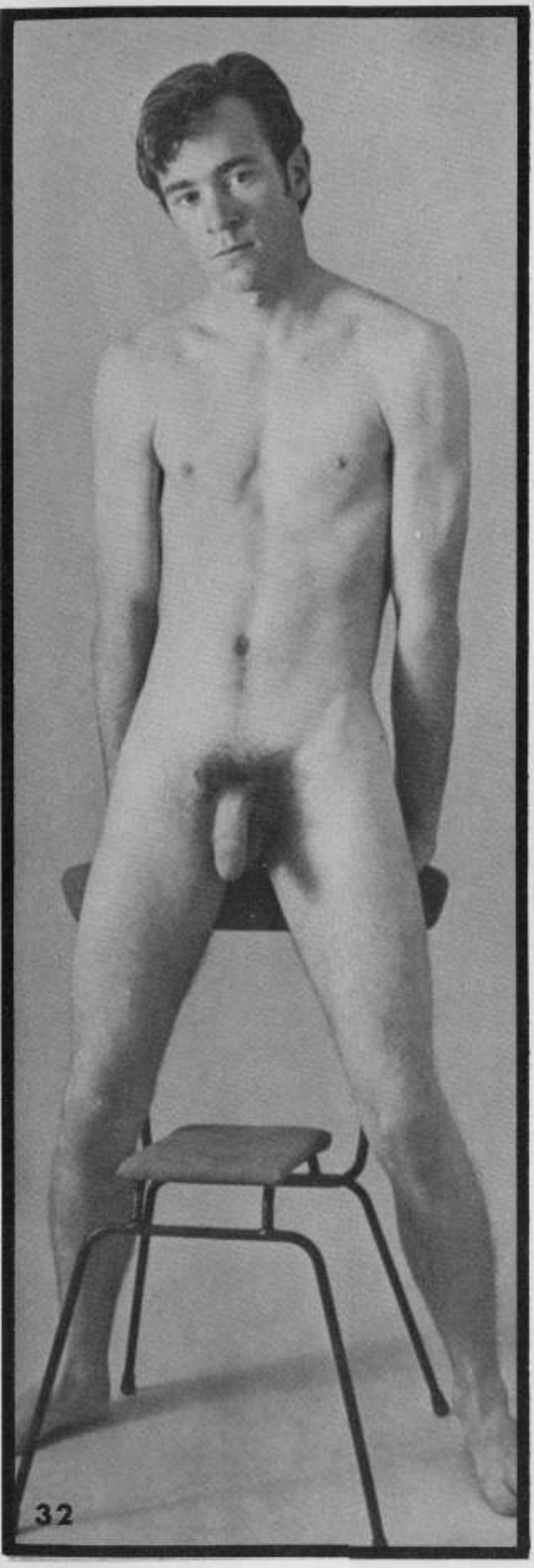

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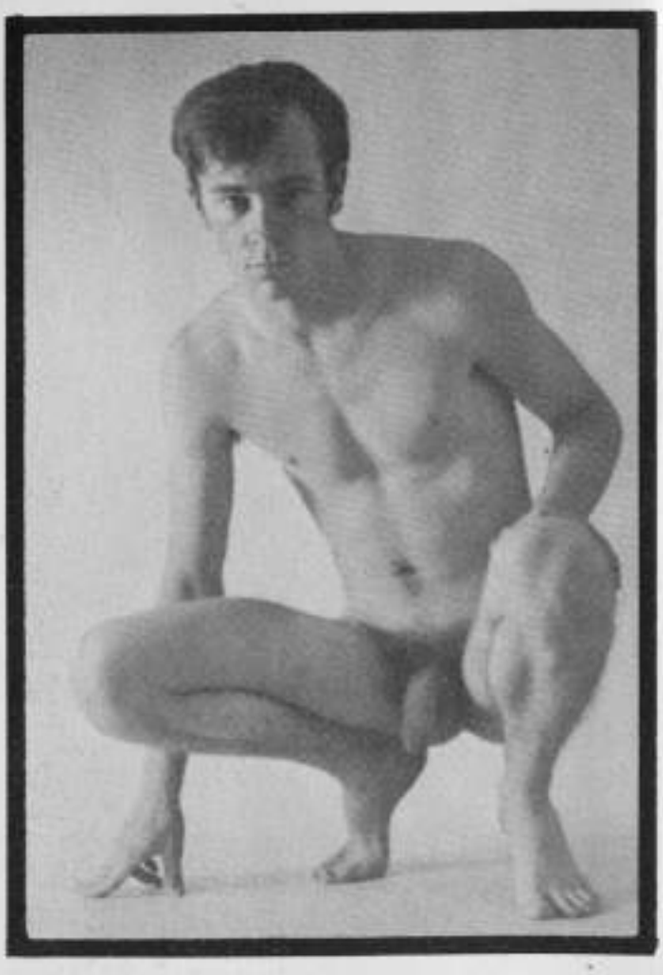

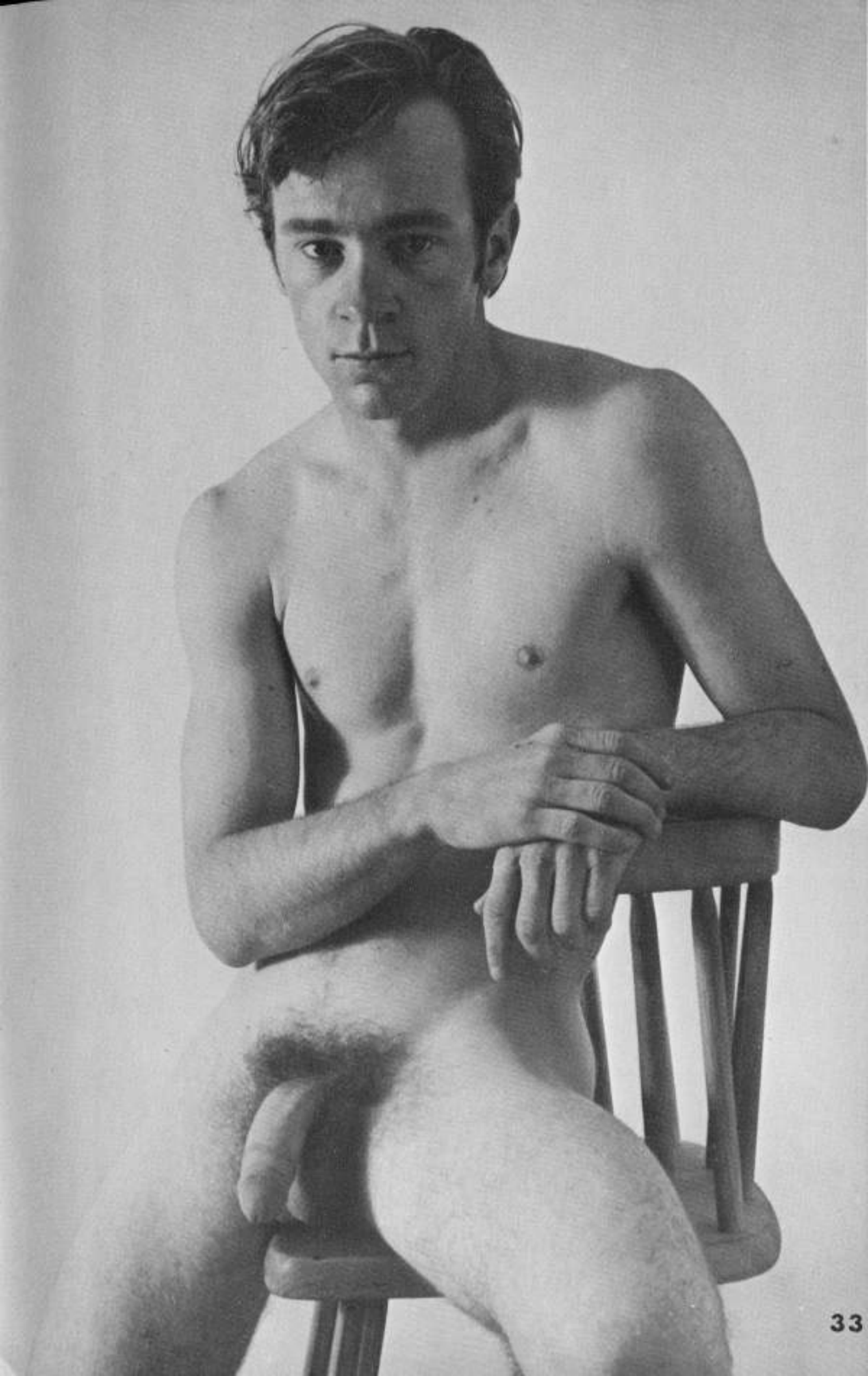

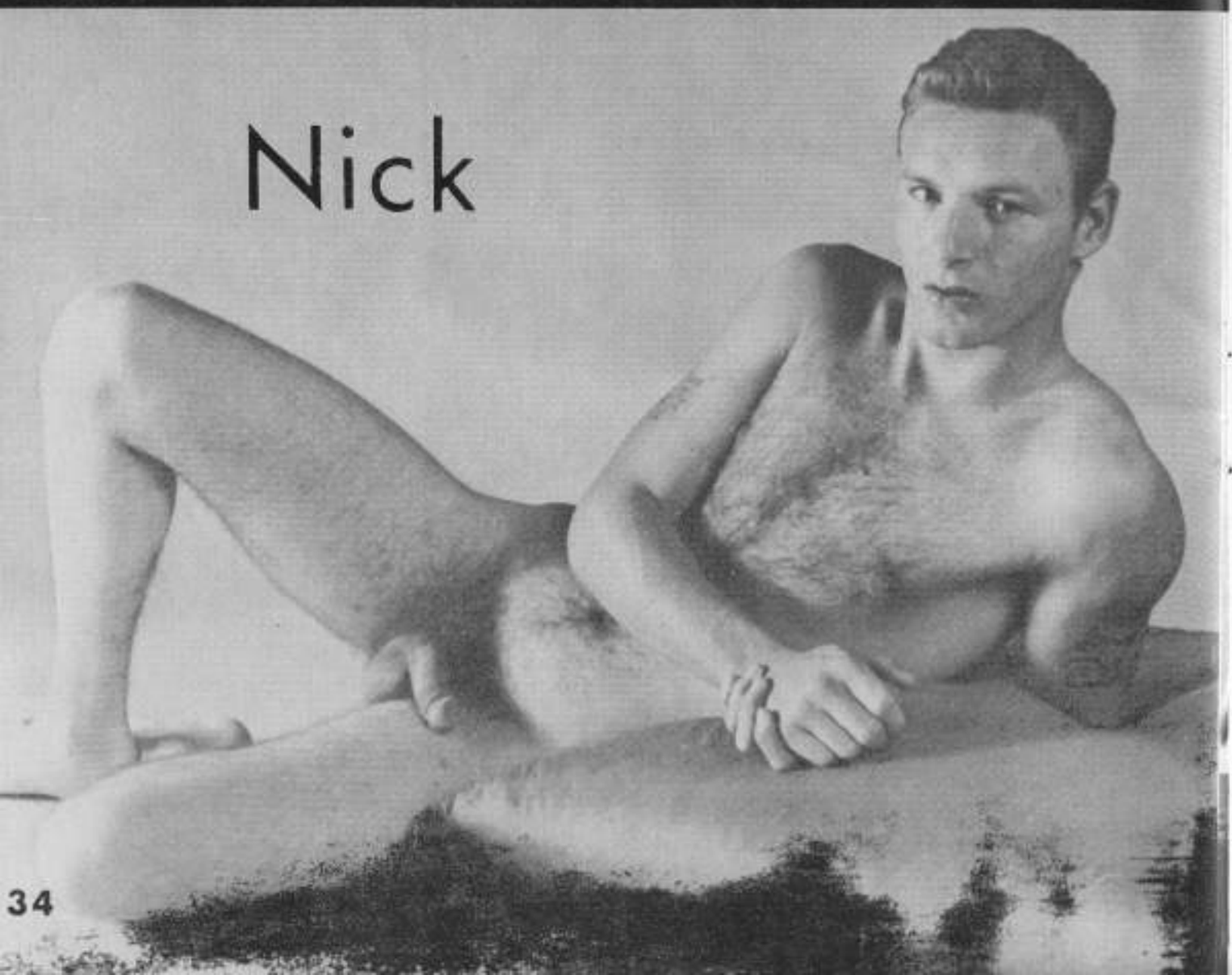
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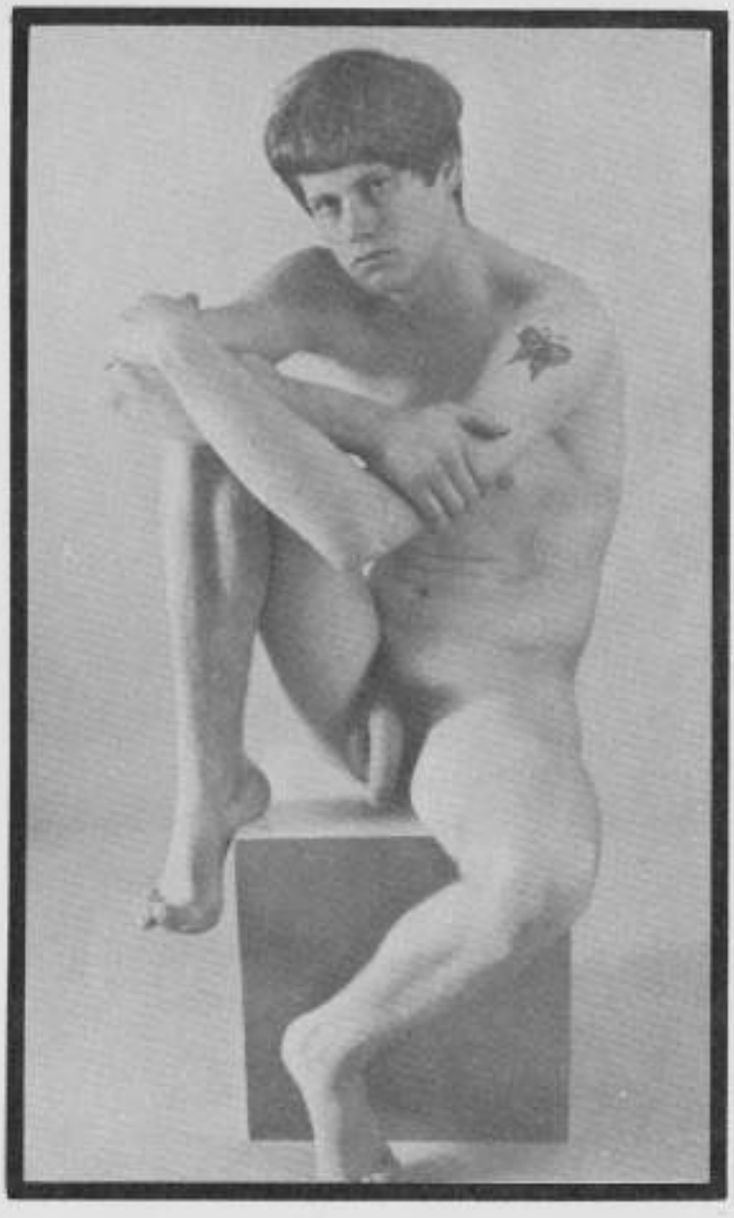

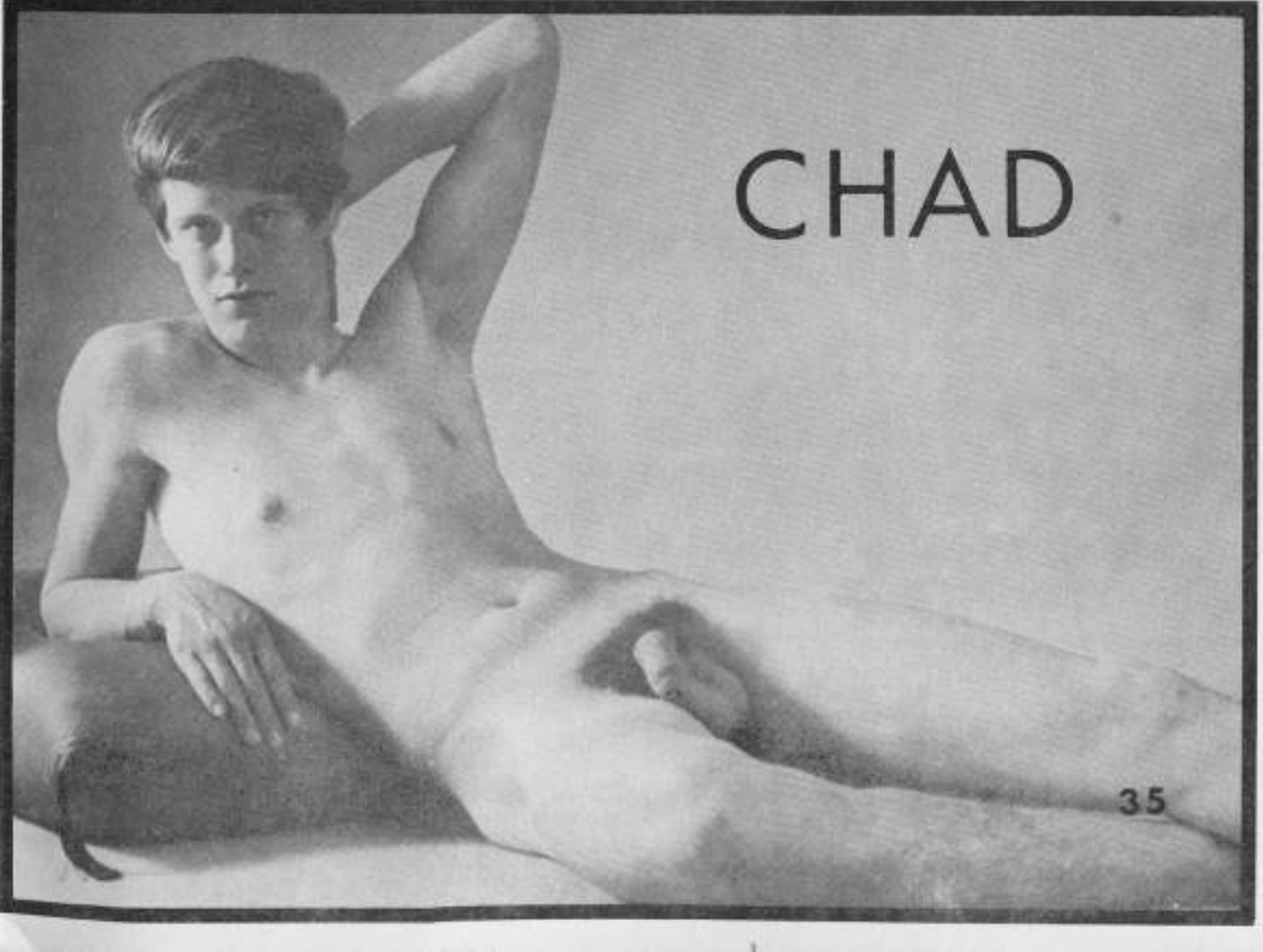

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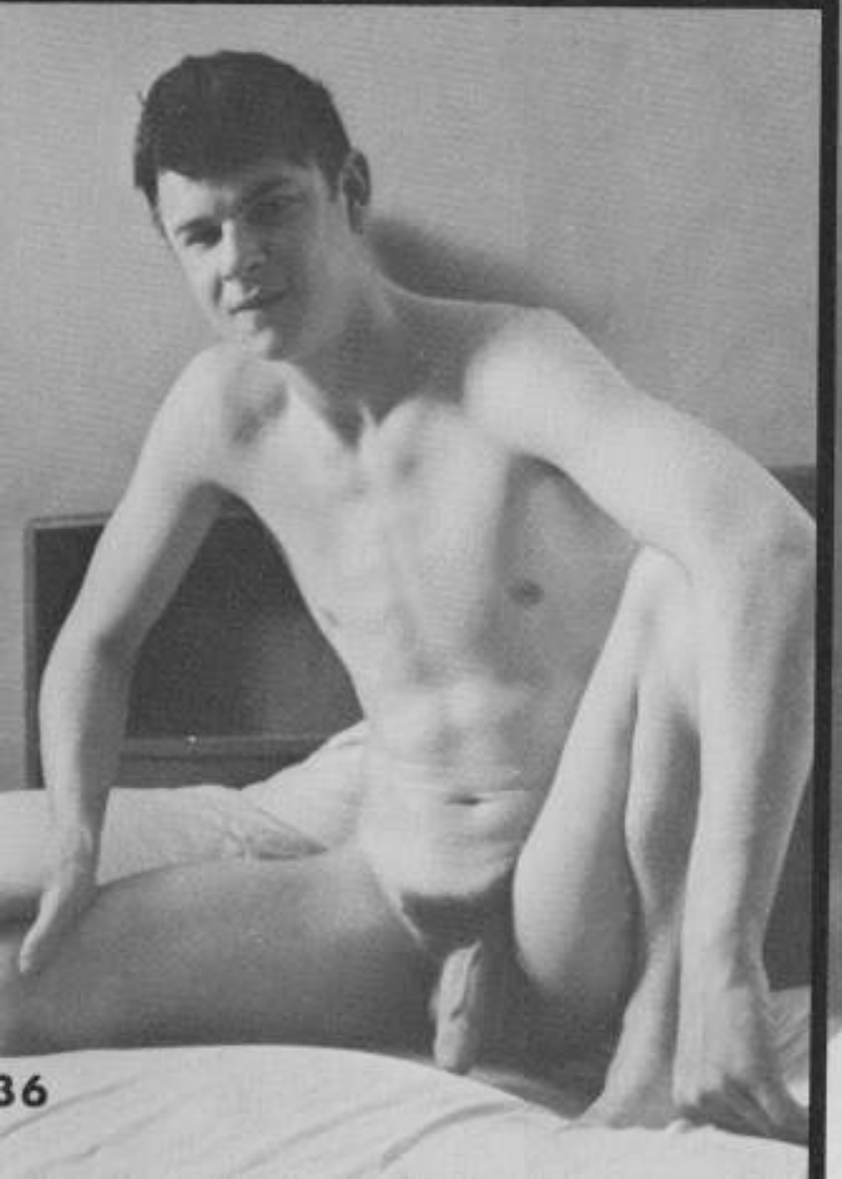

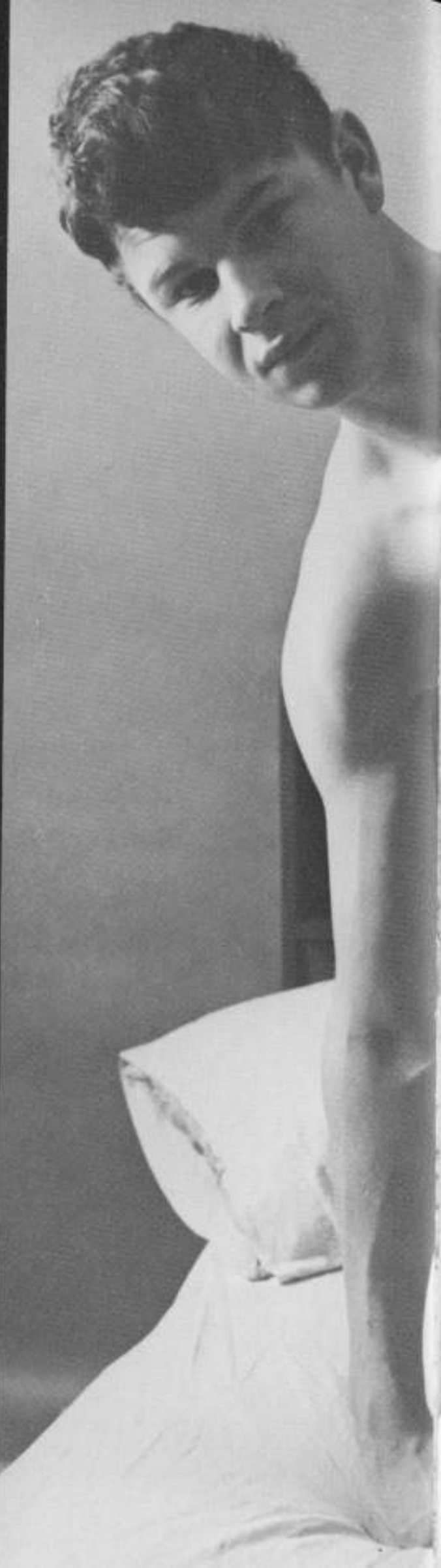

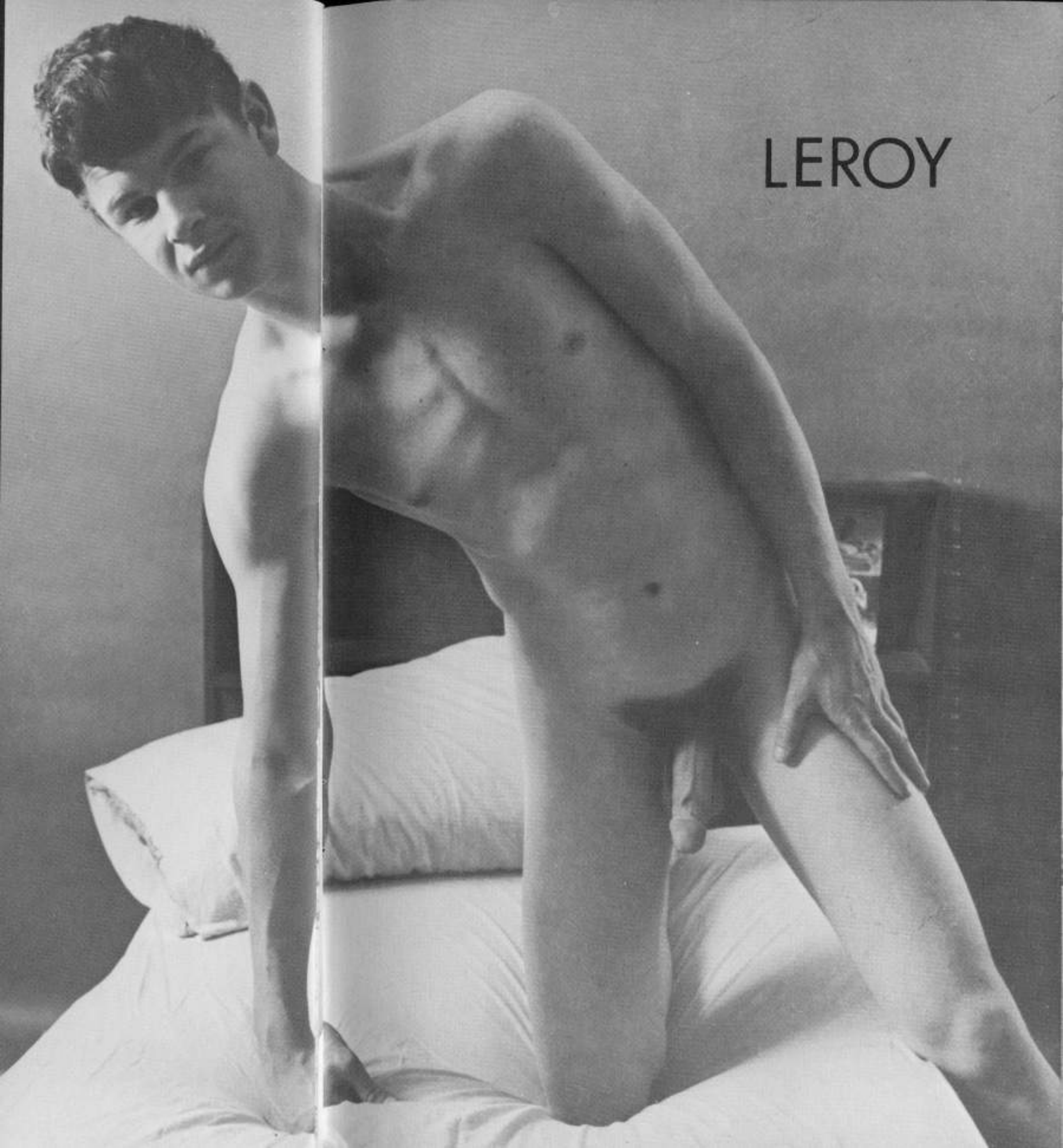

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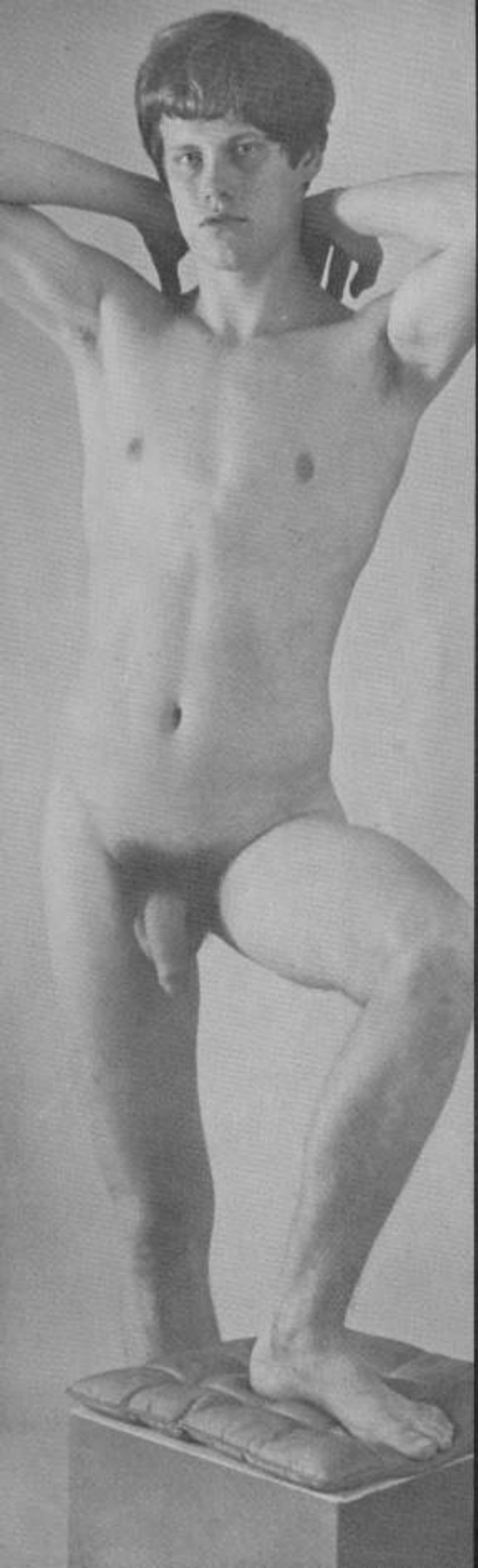

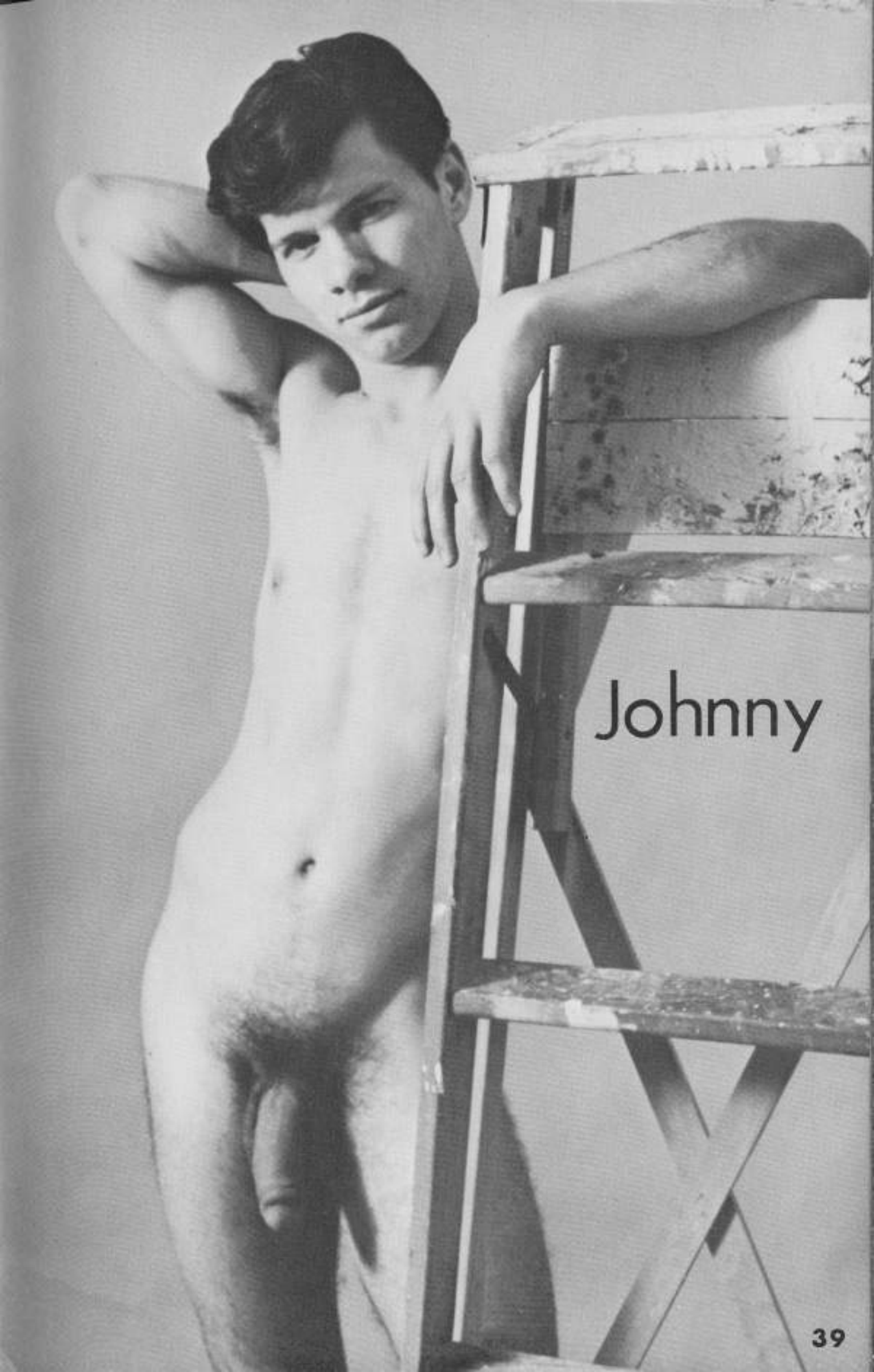
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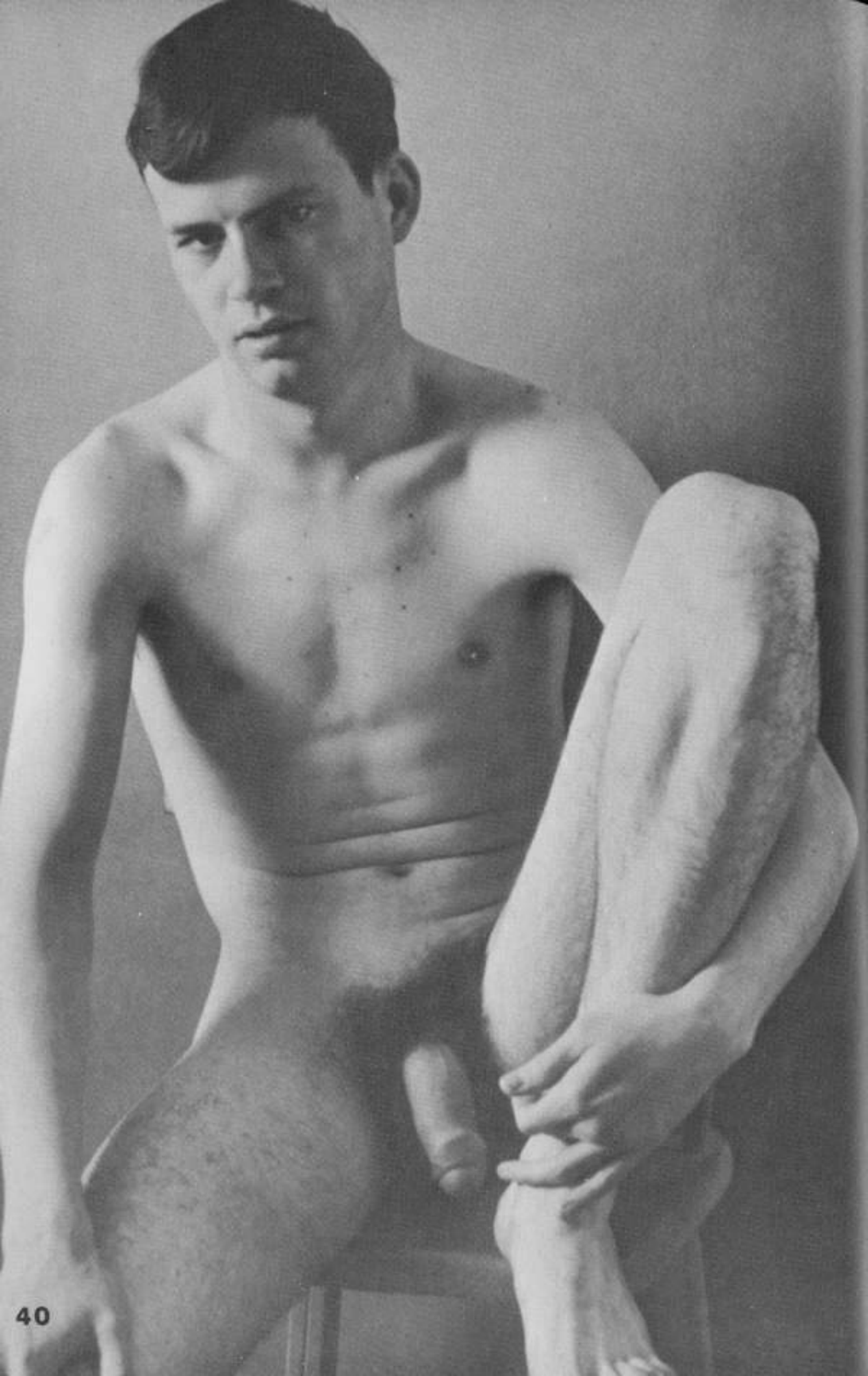

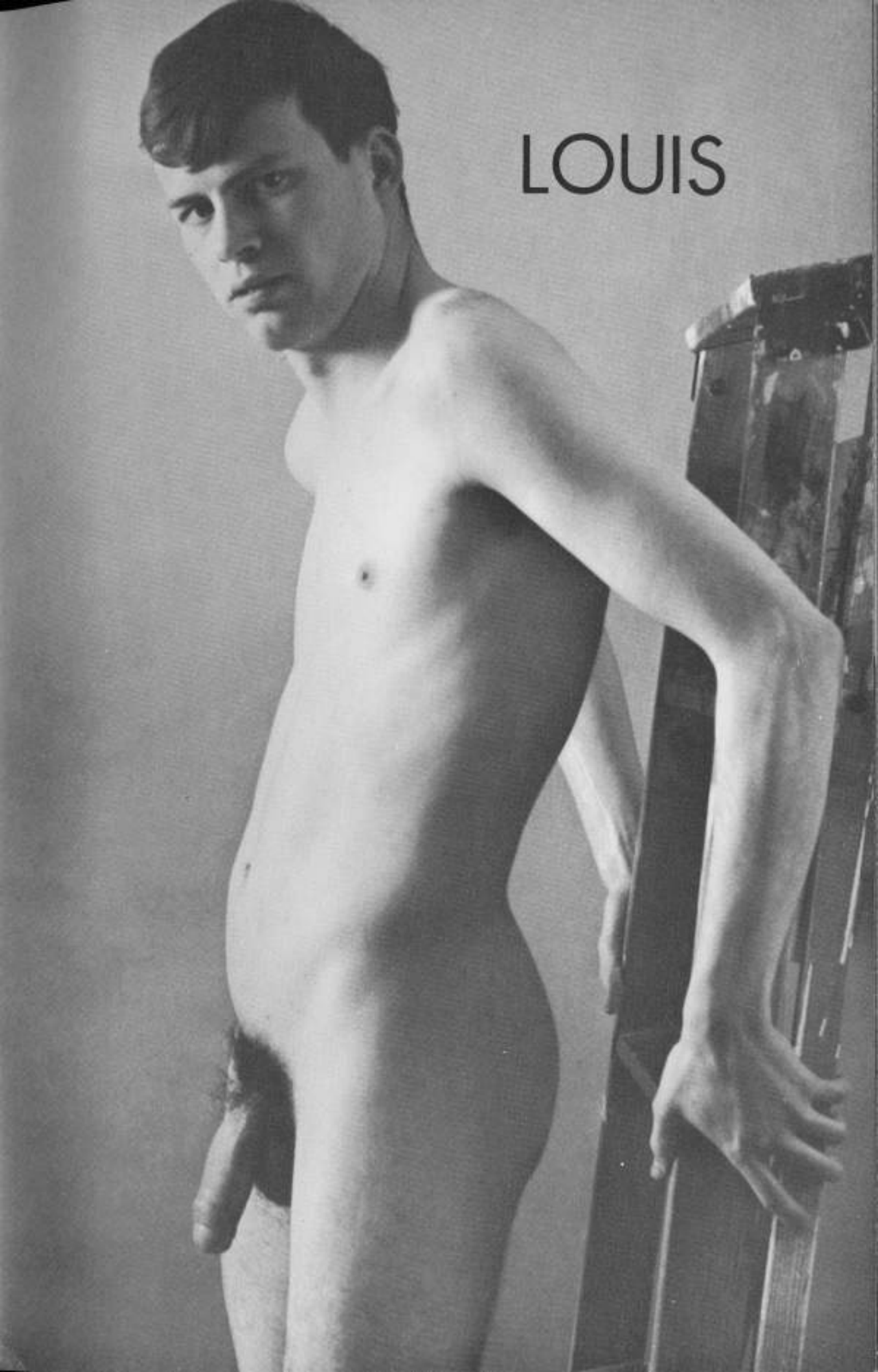
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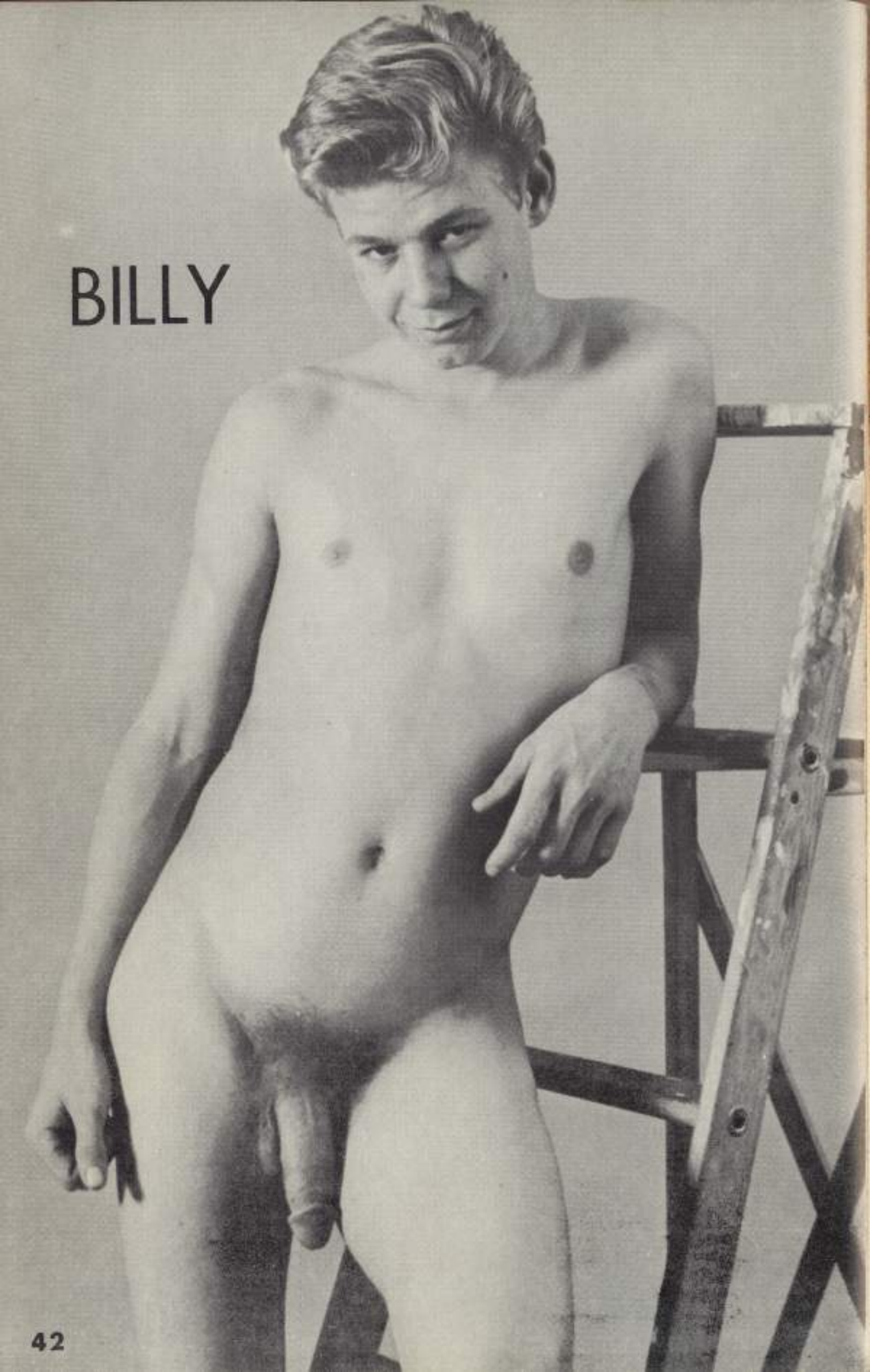
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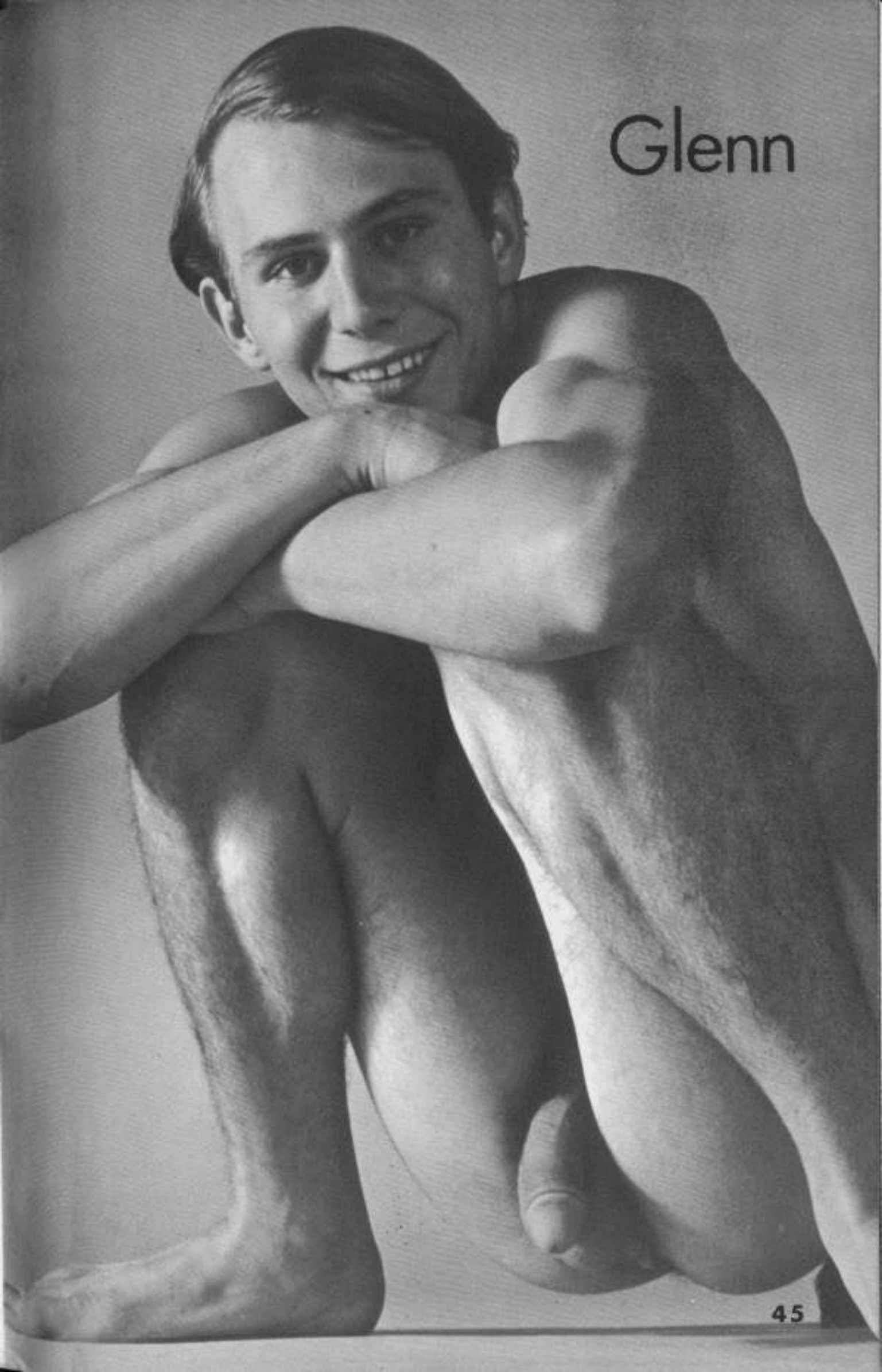
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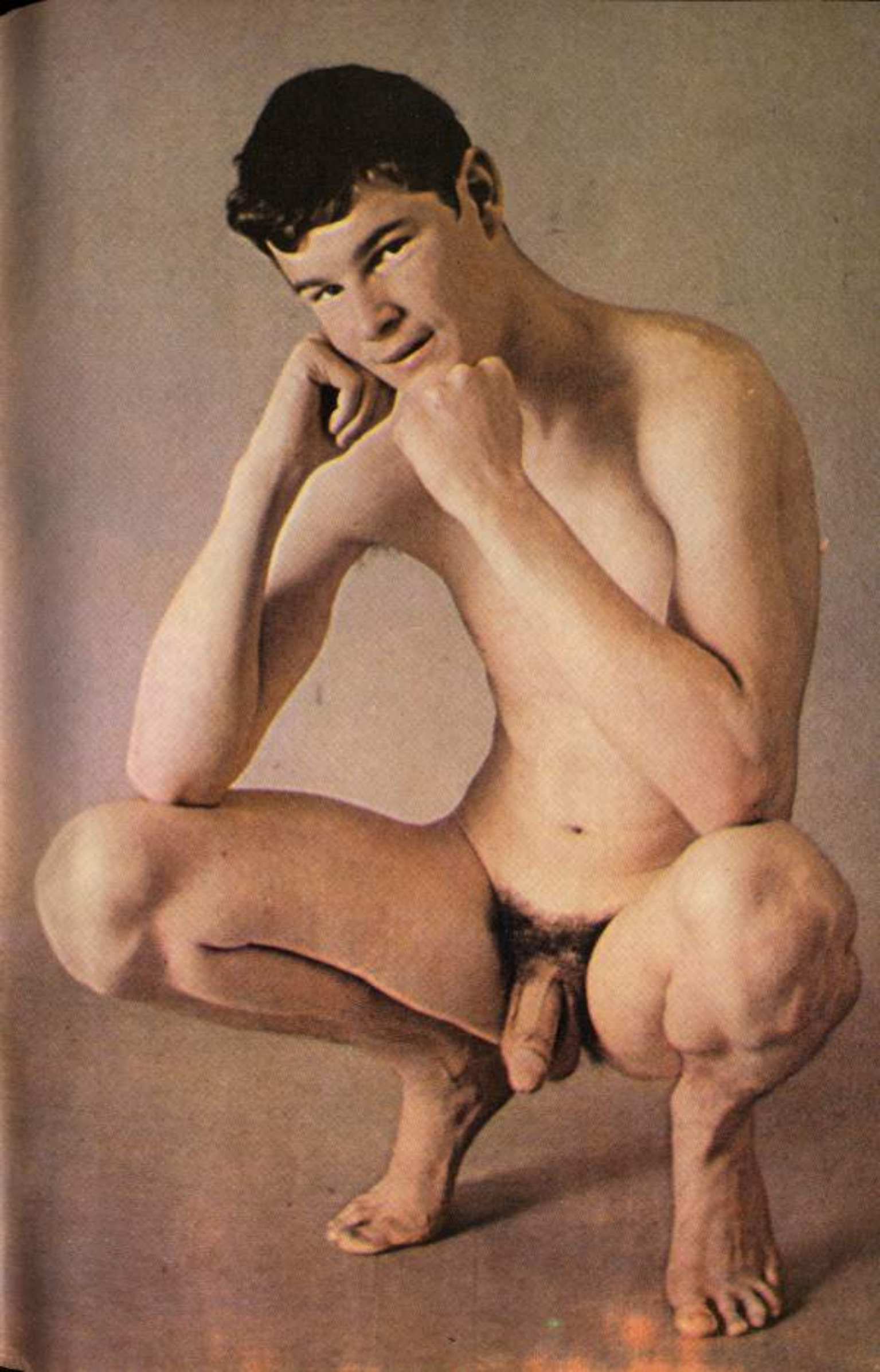

LOUIS
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BILLY
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LEROY
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NICK
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ROGER
146–147–148

CHAD
149–150–151

JESSIE
152–153–154

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BILLY	110	☐	☐	BARRY	139	☐	☐
LEROY	114	☐	☐	GLENN	140	☐	☐
LEROY	115	☐	☐	GLENN	141	☐	☐
LEROY	116	☐	☐	GLENN	142	☐	☐
JOHNNY	117	☐	☐	NICK	143	☐	☐
JOHNNY	118	☐		NICK	144	☐	☐
GREG	125	☐	☐	NICK	145	☐	☐
GREG	126	☐	☐	ROGER	146	☐	☐
GREG	127	☐	☐	ROGER	147	☐	☐
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BUZZ	129	☐	☐	CHAD	149	☐	☐
BUZZ	130	☐	☐	CHAD	150	☐	☐
VAN	131	☐	☐	CHAD	151	☐	☐
VAN	132	☐	☐	JESSIE	152	☐	☐
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